

TOP O' THE WORLD



By MARK E. SWAN
Pictures by HY. MAYER

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Waiting for the Queen. (Page 131.)

TOP O' THE WORLD

A Once upon a Time Tale

By

Mark E. Swan

Pictures by Hy. Mayer



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TO MY LITTLE NIECE
MARION
WHO *LOVES* ICE-CREAM

FOREWORD

Oh, little ones, with your pink cheeks
and shining eyes, come clamber on my
knee, put your arms about my neck, and
listen with all your ears while I tell you a
tale of

ONCE UPON A TIME.

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THE TOP O' THE WORLD

Chapter I



THE Wishing Post grows right out of the ground at the Top of the World. Some very wise men with bald heads and long white beards say it is n't a Wishing Post at all, and call it the North Pole, but Maida knows more about it than they do for she has been there and they have n't. She really and truly went

2 THE TOP O' THE WORLD

there in a flying ship, and I can't begin to tell you all that she saw and all that she did, but I will try and remember as much as I can.

If you doubt my story ask Maida herself. She is a dear little girl, just nine, with curly brown hair and deep blue eyes, and she lives in a big house with papa and mama and Aunt Mary. If you want to find her go to Central Park and turn to the left. Maida's house is the third from the corner. I don't just remember the number, and I've forgotten the street, but as she nearly always wears a red dress and you know how she looks, you can easily find her.

All the trouble began because Maida was such a little girl. She was just big enough to know how little she was, and she did n't like being a little girl at all. She wanted to be grown up. She told me so herself. She had reasons, too, oh so many. To

begin with, there was ICE-CREAM. Maida loved ICE-CREAM. She could never get enough. (Perhaps you can never get enough, so you know just how she felt.) And she could eat and eat and eat, and ICE-CREAM never hurt her. On this point she differed with papa and mama.

Once she awoke in the night with a most burning feeling right in her tummy, and had to drink all sorts of horrid medicine before she felt better. But she could not convince mama and papa it was the brown bread and baked beans she had eaten two days before. They insisted it was three plates of ice-cream for supper. Grown-ups are so silly sometimes.

Then there was bedtime. Maida hated to go off to bed as soon as supper was over and leave everyone else up having a good time. Just at dusk when the flames in the fireplace began to dance and glitter and

flash—and she could see castles and trees and mountains in the coals—SOMEBODY with a white cap and apron would snatch her up and carry her off to a little pink and white room and plump her into a pink and white bed—when she was n't a bit sleepy. Maida often meant to rebel at such treatment, but somehow when she cuddled up in the pink and white bed and finished yawning, she overlooked it, and the next thing—it would be morning.

Still this ruffled her dignity every time it happened—as if she were sleepy, and did n't know it, and she realized—just as you do—that it was because she was a little girl ; for grown-ups can stay awake as long as they like.

Then there were the clothes. Maida wore dresses which reached only to her knees, and plain little petticoats, while her shoes were so strong and tough—oh, you 'll never



“She could see castles . . . in the coals”

believe what tough shoes they were unless you wear the same kind. It was almost impossible to kick holes in them. Then her



Aunt Mary Wore Fluffy Dresses

hair was done in a braid and she had to wear a pinafore—oh, I can't tell you how badly Maida felt about her clothes—especially when she looked at Aunt Mary. Aunt

Mary wore fluffy dresses all hangy and traily, and the sweetest slippers with great high heels, and her hair was puffed out all over her head—oh, it was simply beautiful.

And Aunt Mary read lovely books too, all about lords and ladies, while all of Maida's books were about, Where is Peru? and, How many is six times eight? Poor Maida, she had so many troubles—but you understand, don't you? So she wished and wished with all her heart that she were a really grown-up; that she could read those lovely books and have her hair fuzzed all over her head—that she could wear those trailly, hangy gowns, and stay up nights, and never, *never*, NEVER have to eat anything but ICE-CREAM.

Chapter II

IF you stand with one hand on the Wishing Post, and think hard of what you would like most in all the world, your wish comes true. Is n't that lovely? Sounds like a fairy tale, does n't it? But it is n't a fairy tale at all, it's really true. Of course those old men with the goggles and the bald heads don't believe it. If you ask them they will tell you the North Pole is just the end of the axis of the earth, whatever *that* may mean, and they will insist it is n't a Wishing Post at all. Now, when they tell you this, here's a crusher for them. Ask them how they know. Ask them if they've ever been there to see. Just see what they say to that. Maida has been there, and she knows all about it. To

commence at the very beginning, this is how she came to make the trip.

One evening, Maida was lying on the hearth kicking her fat legs in the air and watching the Flame Folk when she heard *somebody* (you know which one I mean—the one with the white cap and apron) coming. Now of course Maida was n't the least bit sleepy and she did not want to go to bed, so she slipped out of the door and down the long hall to the very end. Then she heard somebody talking—oh, such a fine voice somebody had, just like the growl of a bear—but a nice soft growl, mind you—and what the man with the growly voice said must have been ever so funny, for Aunt Mary laughed and laughed. So Maida peeked. There sat Aunt Mary in one of the trailly, fluffy dresses, and her pretty neck and arms looked so pink and soft, and her eyes were so bright and her cheeks were so

red, that Maida envied her clear to the tips of her toes. The Man with the Growly Voice sat oh very close to Aunt Mary, and he was smiling a little and holding Aunt Mary's hand (Aunt Mary did not seem to mind a bit), then Maida heard him say—"Name the day."

So she went boldly in (because Aunt Mary knew it was some kind of a riddle or something and did n't answer), and said to the Man with the Growly Voice, "How can anybody name days? There are only seven and they're already named—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Then it begins all over again." That must have been the answer to the joke, for Aunt Mary laughed, and the Man with the Growly Voice laughed, and the first thing Maida knew she was sitting on his knee, all comfy and happy. Well, the Man with the Growly Voice was an

Arctic Explorer—if you know what that means. If you don't, I'll tell you. It's a man who wants to go away up North so far that his next step will start him South ; and he had just come back from the land where it is always Winter.

Somehow Maida found him the nicest grown-up she had ever met, he was so interested in everything she said, and somehow when she was cuddled against his big arm, with her nose nestled against his breast it was so easy to explain that she was tired—oh, so tired of being a little girl ; and tell him all her troubles.

He listened to every word and then he told her about the *Wishing Post*. He had really seen it many, many times—he had made ever so many wishes and all but one had come true and he had great hopes of *that*. He must have told Aunt Mary about the wish for she seemed so interested.

Then the Man with the Growly Voice told Maida lots and lots of other things,—not stories mind you, true tales. He had been so long in the cold North that he could



Growly Voice Eats Snowballs

only sleep in the refrigerator, and he had to eat icicles and snowballs all the time because he was used to them. Then he told her of the Eskimos; funny little tame Indians who guard the North Pole, with great white bears, so no one can steal it,

Mary could get a sealskin coat without hurting the seal, so it was quite a relief to find the seals were glad to exchange them for charlotte russe and sugar-plums. But the most wonderful thing of all was the day the Man with the Growly Voice met Santa Claus, for he did really meet him face to face. It seems the Eskimos have Christmas on the Fourth of July, so Santa Claus drove about all day in his sledge with the six reindeer, giving away presents and taking the little Eskimo children for a ride. What a happy little girl Maida was that night, for *somebody* in a white cap and apron didn't know where to find her, and there she was sitting up for once with the grown-ups and not a bit sleepy, not a *bit*.

She grew so intent on the wonders told her by the Man with the Growly Voice that now and then she would miss something he said. Then Aunt Mary would laugh as

if Maida were drowsy, which of course she was n't. Of all his tales the Wishing Post was the best. If she could only go there and wish herself grown up, oh, would n't that be splendid. So she made him promise to take her on his next voyage. She was so happy when he said he would, she shut her eyes to think about it, besides the light was very bright and—well, to this day Maida does n't remember what else the Man with the Growly Voice told her that night.

Chapter III

AND then she found herself—in bed—was n't that a shame. She had been so happy sitting on the knee of the Man with the Growly Voice, so interested in his stories, then that *somebody* (with the white cap and apron) had carried her off to bed. She couldn't remember a thing about it, but of course that is the way it must have happened. Oh, if she could only find the Wishing Post, things like this would not happen, she'd see to that. What a wonderful thing it must be, this Wishing Post, and how she would love to see it—and—what a strange light was coming in the window. It was not morning, so it could not be sunlight, besides, sunlight is so bright. And it wasn't a bit like moonlight, either.

She grew very much interested, and sat up



Maida Crept Out of Bed

in bed to see. She was not at all afraid, for Maida was always a brave little girl, be-

sides—comforting thought, if one *did* call out, why, somebody (with a white cap and apron) was just in the next room. What a strange light—all pale and green and shimmering. My, isn't that a long word! but it means the kind of light you see in dreams, and it seemed to come from under the window. Maida watched it as long as she could, but finally she crept out of bed, went to the window, and what do you think she saw outside—a really and truly flying machine. It was a long bag of cloth like a great big cigar, and underneath it was the dearest little wicker house something like a boat. She could see strange engines through the windows, and there were wings at the sides, and at the back a rudder. There was a steering wheel behind the wicker house, and beside it stood the Man with the Growly Voice. He looked up, saw her, smiled, and waved his hand.

"I've come to take you to the Wishing Post," he said. Maida started to climb out of the window, but she thought better of it when the Man with the Growly Voice spoke again. "Don't you think," he said, "that you had better dress before we start? It will be rather chilly at the North Pole, with nothing on but a pink and white nightie." How her fingers flew! She found all her clothes nicely piled on a chair beside her bed, and she dressed quicker than she ever dressed before, or since. Luckily her pretty white fur coat Aunt Mary had given her was hanging in the closet, and the cap beside it. She put them on, and as the coat reached to her feet she felt very warm and comfy. You will never know how quietly she opened the door. You will never know how "creepy" she stole down the stair. But just as she opened the big front door she happened to think of mama and papa and Aunt Mary.

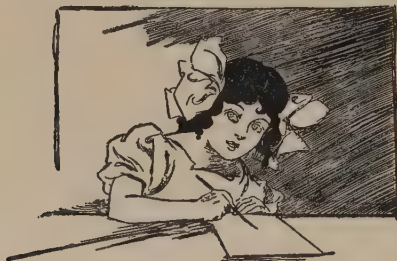
She thought they might be worried, so she sat down to write them a note. Maida could write very well for such a little girl, although her T's and her F's would persist in looking alike, or worse still, when she meant to make a W an M would hop into its place. Well, this note was the best thing she had ever written. She had no idea she could write so rapidly. All the letters made themselves properly and somehow got into the right place. Altogether, it was a splendid letter. As nearly as I remember, it ran something like this:

“ Dear Mama, and Papa, and Aunt Mary:

“I was afraid you might be worried when you found me gone, and I was afraid to tell you because you might not let me go. I'll be back in a day or two. I've only gone with a gentleman to find the North Pole and wish to be grown up. With dearest love,

“MAIDA.”

She knew that when they got her note they would n't be worried at all. Then she went out and closed the big front door behind her. The Man with the Growly Voice was waiting and he lifted her into the little



*Dear Mamma Papa and
Aunt Harry:*

wicker house. "This is your room," he said, showing her into a little cabin, and it was just lovely; all cuddly and comfy and bright. The little brass bed shone and shone; the pretty mirror reflected her happy face. The lights danced and flickered—ah, in every way it was

just exactly like what a room in a flying ship should be.

Then she noticed they were going up—they passed the roof, then the chimney, then the church steeple next door. The house grew smaller and smaller until she could n't tell it from the houses beside it. They floated over the Park and Maida could see the lights of the city underneath her—and—then over the river with the boats going out and coming in.

And she did n't feel at all strange or in the least frightened. It all seemed perfectly natural and usual. A dreadful doubt assailed her. Suppose she were not awake. Suppose she was asleep and dreaming. "Excuse me," she said timidly to the Man with the Growly Voice, "but will you please tell me your name?" "My name," he growled in reply, "is Morse." "Well then Mr. Morse," she said, "tell me, please,

honest to goodness cross your heart—am I awake?” And the Man with the Growly Voice crossed his heart and said, “Yes,” So that was settled, for of course he would n’t tell a story and say she was awake if she were asleep. Oh, what a happy little Maida, drifting—drifting far above the clouds, no more lessons or oatmeal porridge, or short frocks. Never again. Never would she have to go to bed at twilight. Traily, fluffy dresses and sit up nights and ice-cream—oh, lots and lots of ice-cream, for she was going to the Wishing Post and she would never come back till she had grown up.



Chapter IV

THEY flew and flew and flew. Maida could look out of her window and see the lights in houses far beneath. By and by the sky turned gray, little streaks of silver began to appear and the stars overhead grew pale. The streaks of silver turned to pink, to crimson, and then a huge red ball of fire seemed to shoot up out of the sea and hang in the East. "What is it?" asked Maida. She was quite surprised when the Man with the Growly Voice told her it was the sun. She had never seen the sun look like that—for never before had she been awake at sunrise. Over great lakes they sailed, and over forests of pines and ranges of high mountains, but there were no more cities and towns, only tents with Indians standing

about them. And all the time the Man with the Growly Voice stood beside the wheel, steering the airship and looking straight ahead; you know how careful papa has to be when he takes you out in his auto car? Well—it's just like that when one is sailing a flying machine, only it's harder because an auto can only turn to the right or left, and if anything happens to the sparking plug or the jibboom, why papa can take the monkey-wrench and the hammer and the saw and the screw-driver and crawl under the auto to fix it. Then when he finds he's only made it worse he can get a horse to haul you home again.

But a flying machine can turn to the right and to the left. Besides that, it can go up or down or sideways or turn over over and over, and my goodness, when anything happens to the sparking plug or the

jibboom of a flying machine you don't have time to crawl under and fix it, for it falls and falls—and—oh, it's "shuddery" to think of such a thing.

Well—Maida knew the Man with the Growly Voice must be tired, and besides it was breakfast time, so she asked him to let her sit by the wheel and steer the flying machine a while:—then he could rest and get breakfast, and of course he *did*. She was a very proud little girl as she sat there guiding the airship through the air, and before long she began to play a bit.

It was great sport to make a long dip downward and *just* miss the top of a mountain. It was quite a joke to glide along behind an eagle and take him by surprise and watch him flap his wings madly to get out of the way, as she hooted the horn, "hoot, hoot." Did I tell you that all flying

ships have horns, just like automobiles? Well they do, to warn the birds and frighten the shooting stars away. Oh, she was having a lovely time.

Then the Man with the Growly Voice appeared in the door with a look of dismay on his face. "I was in such a hurry to get away," he said, "that I forgot to bring a single thing to eat. Is n't that just like an Arctic Explorer? You see we're so anxious to explore we forget all about such things as food and clothes and fuel."

"Maybe we could borrow some ice-cream from one of the little Eskimo children," faltered Maida timidly and she became so intent on thinking about the breakfast she could n't have, that before she knew what she was doing she ran slap-bang into a comet. Of course the comet had no business there, and it was just as much surprised

as Maida for it shouted and shouted, but before they could stop they were right in the midst of the tail. The man with the growly voice sprang to the bow. "Splice the bowsprit," he roared. "Shiver the mainsail" — "luff-luff." "Please sir, I don't know how to luff-luff," quavered Maida. Alas, it was no use. The comet switched its tail; because it *does* tickle a comet when a flying ship gets tangled up in its tail—and one of the wings fell off the side of the ship. Then they began to go down, down, down.

Did you ever fall out of bed in the night, when you were half asleep? Well it felt just like that, only a million times worse. Down, down, down. "Oh, have n't you got a life-preserver or something," sobbed Maida. But the Man with the Growly Voice did n't answer, he only stood and said things like—well, like Uncle George says

when he tries to drive a nail and hits his thumb. Which was very naughty of him. Then just when Maida had given up in despair and was so frightened her heart had



The Birds Came to the Rescue

stopped beating—just when she was saying “*Now*—for an awful bump,” a wonderful thing happened. Two of the very birds she had been teasing flew up, one seized the

Man with the Growly Voice by the collar and the other seized Maida, then they flew gently with them down to the ground—and there was n't any bump at all. Then they all sat and looked at each other.

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom of the page.

Chapter V

“Do you know,” said Maida, “I believe the birds are laughing at us?”

Well, it really looked as though they were. Both of them sat staring first at Maida, then at the Explorer; now and then flapping their wings and making a sort of noise like—just like—did you ever slip on the ice and sit down hard when you weren't expecting to do anything of the sort, and *then* did you hear someone across the street or in the next house giggle about it? Well, perhaps Maida only imagined it, but that is exactly the kind of noise those two birds were making. After a while they rose in the air, slowly flapping their big wings—flew about the wreck of the airship a few times, just to show how much better real wings are than

made wings, then they disappeared in the distance. Maida was getting cold.

"As long as you're an Explorer," she said, "don't you think you had better explore something? Where are we?"

"Why, here," said the man with the growly voice, "just here." If we were n't here, you know, we'd be somewhere else."

"Oh, I see," replied Maida doubtfully, "and do you mind telling me where "*here*" is? Because I've an idea it isn't anywhere."

"I suppose you've studied geography," said the man with the growly voice. "Oh, no," Maida pouted, "I hate it." "Too bad," he answered. "If you had studied geography, you'd know exactly where we are." "Haven't you studied it?" asked Maida. "Let's change the subject," was his reply. Maida began to shiver.

The Explorer took from his pocket a small tablet wrapped in tissue paper, which

looked very much like a piece of candy. He took the paper off and threw the tablet on the ground, just as you pop torpedoes on the Fourth of July. In an instant all the ice and snow began to melt. Grass began to grow. Maida could feel it under her feet—pushing to come up, it was growing so fast. Some little flowers suddenly peeped from the turf. There was no fire, no smoke, but everything was warm and sweet, just like a Spring day.

“My goodness ! What did you do?” said Maida, as she stopped shivering. “What was that?” she continued. “It would be lovely when the janitor doesn’t turn on the steam.”

“That,” said the Explorer, “is a tablet of condensed climate. I gathered it in Mexico. Down there they have very warm weather, very warm indeed, so I simply condensed the heat into these little tablets; and that

reminds me, I've a tin can full of it on the airship. I'd better get it as I think we'll need it. The tablets are not very strong. One of them will only heat up a city for a year or so, but I've enough in the can to turn Greenland into Africa." So he strapped the can of condensed climate on his back.

At this moment they saw someone coming toward them through the high grass. As the stranger drew near Maida noticed that he was a very handsome young man with wonderful broad shoulders and long curly hair. He did not appear to see them but walked steadily on with his eyes fastened on the horizon, and would have passed them but Maida stopped him and asked him who he was and where he was going.

"I am a disconsolate lover," he replied, "and I seek one in the far North."

"Tell me all about it," said Maida eagerly, for she loved romance.

"You'll laugh at me, I know," he answered, "but I must tell someone, for my heart is full of it. One night I seemed to float away to a beautiful land all pure and white and in this strange place was a lady, tall and slender with cheeks like snow-drops and eyes like stars. Ah, she was so fair and white. She beckoned and I drew near. She smiled and I awoke, but I can not forget. Always in my dreams I see her smiling, beckoning. I have sought her through the North. I will never rest until I find her."

"Do you think," inquired Maida anxiously, "that you will find her soon?" "Oh yes," he replied, "I am sure of it. I must find her soon," and he strode away with his eyes fixed on the horizon.

"I've a splendid idea," said Maida, "if

he's going to find the lady soon, let us follow him. Perhaps she'll be able to tell us where we can get breakfast."

"Now that *is* really a splendid idea," said the Man with the Growly Voice, "and we will." So they did. But before long they began to find it cold again (the tablet of climate was such a little one). They began to find ice and snow in places. Bye and bye Maida heard something behind her and turned around, and there was a wolf. Oh, such an awful creature. What do you think Maida did? What would *you* do? Scream? Well, that's what she did.

"He'll eat us!" she wailed. "Oh, have n't you a gun or something to shoot him?"

The man with the growly voice took another tablet of climate from his pocket and just as the wolf rushed at them with wide open jaws, he tossed the tablet in its mouth. My, what a surprise for that wolf! He

thought he was going to have a nice little girl for breakfast, and presto! he had swal-



The Wolf Swallows a Tablet of Climate

lowed three or four days of awfully hot weather. He rolled and yelped and jumped about—well, if you want to know just

exactly how he behaved, borrow a tablet of climate from the Explorer; go up there where Maida was, and give it to the first wolf that comes along. Then you 'll see.

Finally the wolf ran away as hard as he could. But the climate he had swallowed made everything warm as it passed. So they all three followed it along a nice grassy lane bordered with flowers, and warm as a Spring day.

Chapter VI

MAIDA began to think the disconsolate lover was mistaken about finding the "Lady" soon. There seemed to be no sign of her. And they walked and walked and walked. At last, in the distance, they saw a house. Not a great big fine house such as Maida lived in at home, but a low hut built of heavy logs with a slanting roof and a high chimney with lots of smoke coming out of it. The wolf passed by the house without stopping for it was in a hurry to go somewhere and get something cool to drink, but the disconsolate lover knocked loudly on the door.

"I wonder if the lady lives here," said Maida. The disconsolate lover knocked

again, and again, and finally the door swung open and they all walked in. They were in a toy shop. The house looked—oh, ever so much larger now that they were in, than it did from the outside. There were long rooms filled with toys and dollies. There were benches and shelves where toys were being made by funny little men. The walls and rafters were hung with all sorts of jumping-jacks and — oh, everything children like.

The lad who opened the door stood looking at them. He was dressed all in leather and his hair hung over his neck. Maida was sure she had never seen such a nice friendly looking boy. "My name is Billy," he said. "Whose little boy are you?" "If you please," replied Maida, "I'm not a boy—I'm a little girl," and she threw open her long fur cloak so he could see what a pretty dress she wore. At once all the little work-

men stopped work and crowded about her, for strange as it may seem they had hardly ever seen a little girl. Maida was quite frightened and looked about for the Man with the Growly Voice—or the Disconsolate Lover, but as neither of them were in sight she ran to Billy for protection and cuddled in his arms. “What’s the matter with them?” she faltered. Billy laughed. “They’re curious to see you,” he replied, “because you’re a little girl.” “Little girls must be scarce up here,” observed Maida (still nestling close to Billy). Billy laughed again. “Scarce,” he said, “why I should say they *are!*” So he sent the workmen back to their benches and gave Maida all the ice-cream she could eat for breakfast. It was good ice-cream too, still—just for once she would n’t have minded if she could have had a cup of coffee and a slice of bacon. After breakfast Billy showed her all over

the shop, and she was allowed to see the workmen making toys. When they returned to the great room who should they meet but a huge Eskimo and his pretty little daughter, both dressed entirely in furs.

The Eskimo was very grand. "I am Kankakee," he said, and waving his hand toward his daughter added, "this is Kokomo, my daughter," upon which Kokomo came to Maida and made a lovely curtsy saying something that sounded like—well I can hardly tell you just what it was like. Did you ever hear an angry old hen calling her chickens? Well it was something like that, and something like the rattle on the trolley car when the man lets off the brake—for poor little Kokomo could not speak English—only Eskimo.

"So you're an Eskimo," said Maida, "can you tell me about the Wishing Post?"

The big Eskimo drew himself up proudly.

"I can tell you all about it," he replied, "for I am a great man, and very wise, also I know many things. The Wishing Post grows out of the earth at the Top of the World and if one makes a wish upon it the wish will come true."

Maida was overjoyed. "I am going to make a wish just as soon as I find it," she told him. "You find it!" he said scornfully, "why it is death for mortal to try to cross the Forbidden Land, to reach the city of Illusia. Even *I* have never crossed those icy wastes, and should you find the Post you would be put to death by the Queen of the North, Aurora Borealis, or her Prime Minister, Jack Frost. Look!" and he pointed out of the window, "you can see the lights shining from her crown—when she is pleased the light is white; when she is jealous it is green. When she is sad the light is blue, and when she is angry the light is red."

At this moment a huge stream of red light waved about and cast a red glow over all the room.

“My goodness!” said Maida, “she must be in a dreadful temper to-day!” But the Eskimo and his daughter only drew their fur robes about them and walked away. Maida would have followed them to find out some more but she ran plump into the roundest, jolliest, old man you ever saw. He wore a long green coat and big leather boots, and his long hair and beard were snow-white. Oh, he was so fat and so jolly! His face was red and chubby and he had the nicest smile; he reminded her of some one but she could n’t think just who it was. He was very much surprised to see Maida. “Well, well!” he shouted, “a little girl. Come sit on my knee, my dear, and tell me all about it.”

So Maida sat on his knee and told him



Maida Meets Santa Claus

all about it. "I'm going to the Wishing Post," she said, "and wish to be grown up."

"Grown up?" replied the chubby old man. "Why childhood is the happiest time of life."

"That's what the grown-ups tell us," Maida answered, "but I guess they've forgotten all about it. I don't suppose you were ever spanked and put to bed without your supper because you would n't learn your lessons."

The chubby old man became very earnest and a little sad. "If you grow up quickly," he said, "you won't care for dollies and candy any more. You can't sit like this on my knee, and you'll always be puzzling your pretty little head because you've nothing to wear."

Maida looked at him rather puzzled. "Your face looks so—so familiar to me,"

she said, "I 've seen you somewhere but I can't remember where it was."

Billy looked at Maida and smiled. "Why in your picture books," he laughed. "Don't you know who this is? Why Santa Claus, of course." And it was.

Chapter VII

How would you like to meet Santa Claus face to face? How would you like him to hold you on his knee and tell you all about everything? How would you like him to show you all about, and let you see the wonderful sleigh and pet the reindeers? Well then, you can just imagine the fun Maida had.

“Do you know,” she said to him shyly, “I am really very glad I met you. You see, Willie Porter, he’s ten, and he knows much more than I do, or thinks he does,—well, he told me there wasn’t any Santa Claus. He hung up his stocking last Christmas, then he stayed awake all night to see if Santa Claus filled it. His papa and

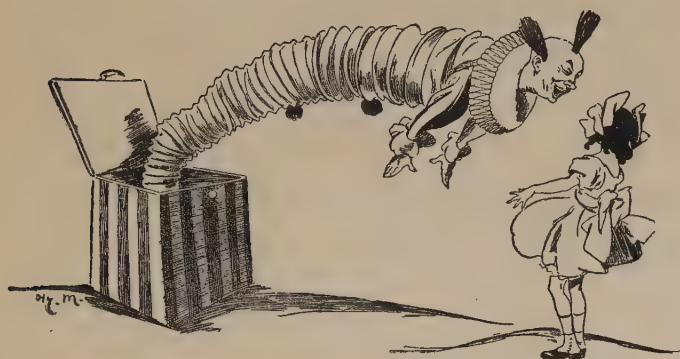
mama came into his room ever so many times in the night, but you never came near."

"Ah! I can explain that," laughed Santa. "Willie Porter's papa used to have a fine big open chimney and a lovely fireplace. Then I used to go there every Christmas. But now they've shut up the fireplace, so I can't get down the chimney, and they've put in steam heat. Does Willie Porter think I can bring my gifts and crawl through a radiator?" And Santa Claus laughed till he shook like a jelly.

"Ah, I see," said Maida. "Well, as I have seen all the toys and had a most splendid time I s'pose I must be going, for I am in a hurry to get to the Wishing Post and grow up." So she prepared to resume her journey but Santa Claus would n't hear of it. "You have n't seen all the toys," he shouted. "The two best ones were just

finished to-day. Come along with me and we'll take a look at them."

So she went with him into a room she hadn't seen before, but all she could see was two boxes. One was very tall and stood on end, the other was square, with green and yellow stripes on it.



Out Popped Jack-in-the-Box

Maida began to peer about the square box with green and yellow stripes on it, when, all of a sudden, she touched a little button. The lid of the box flew open, and out popped the biggest Jack-in-the-Box she

had ever seen. He must have been made of springs inside, for he leaned this way and that, and juggled up and down, till Maida thought he'd break in two. He was dressed in a long coat or shirt with pleats in it, just like the folding part of papa's camera, and he looked very funny. "I feel just like a concertina," he remarked.

Maida ran to the other box, opened it, and out stepped a Candy Kid. He was much taller than Maida, his arms and legs were made of stick candy, his body was a large chocolate drop, and his head was a marshmallow. Before Maida realized what she was doing she picked off one of his fingers and ate it. The Candy Kid did n't mind, but Santa Claus did n't like it at all. He told her not to do anything of the sort again, and got some candy to make the Candy Kid another finger.

"Oh, you beautiful little dolly," sighed Jack-in-the-Box looking at Maida.

"She is n't a dolly," said the Candy Kid. "I believe Santa Claus made her out of a charlotte russe," for of course the Candy Kid thought Santa Claus made everything out of some kind of sweetmeats.

But Jack-in-the-Box was too full of his thoughts to let the Candy Kid stop him. He bobbed his poor little head, shook about in the box and said: "Oh, I like you very much. I would kneel and tell you all about it, only I have no knees. I would clasp you in my arms, only I have no arms."

"I like you too," said Maida shyly, and she nestled up against him. "You are very quaint. Oh, how your poor heart is beating."

"That is n't my heart," replied Jack-in-the-Box, that's my mainspring." Suddenly a

loud rattle came from somewhere near his chin. "There," he sighed, "a cog slipped."

The Candy Kid had been listening, and he did n't seem to like Maida to notice Jack-in-the-Box so much, so he politely gave her his arm and walked away with her. Jack-in-the-Box lost his temper at this and threatened the Candy Kid with all sorts of dreadful things, when suddenly there was a rattle; a jerk; and Jack-in-the-Box leaned over limp and flat. "Oh, is he dead?" sobbed Maida. "No, only run down," chuckled Santa Claus who then wound him up. "He always runs down," said Santa, "just when he should n't."

"Oh, I like him so much," laughed Maida, "but I should think you'd find it awfully hard work to make them." "Not a bit," answered Santa Claus, "I think of something to delight children, and presto—it is made."

Jack-in-the-Box set up a howling, till they had to stop their ears. "Think me some arms and legs," he roared; "think me some arms and legs."

"I have," answered Santa Claus; and sure enough, there they were, two funny little arms swinging stiffly about, and as he hopped out of the box Maida saw he had two stiff little legs. Jack-in-the-Box tried to walk but it was very hard for him.

"Don't you see," he inquired, "that I am very starchy. Think me some ball bearings in the joints." So Santa Claus did, and then he was all right. Oh, they had a fine time, while Santa Claus left them all alone to go and pack an order of toys for some little children in Bombay. But just when the fun was at its height Maida heard a tremendous roar. She turned around to see what made such a

noise, and her hair stood on end with fright, for there stood a great big white Polar Bear. The Candy Kid climbed into his box. Maida flew wildly about the room and finally shut herself in a cupboard, but poor Jack—just as he was about to make his escape, he ran down. The bear slowly drew near Jack-in-the-Box and Maida's heart flew up in her mouth for she was afraid it would eat him. But it did n't. It wound him up. Then Jack-in-the-Box said "thank you," and the Bear bowed politely. The Candy Kid saw that the Bear was n't hungry, so he came out of his box and tickled the Bear behind the left ear, and the Bear liked it so well he began to hop about and dance. The Candy Kid began to dance, then Jack-in-the-Box began to dance, and they laughed and danced and jumped about till they reached the door, and danced

out of it; and the last Maida saw of the Candy Kid and Jack-in-the-Box and the friendly Bear, they were dancing away, together.



Chapter VIII

WELL, it does make one feel bad to have playmates run away like that, and Maida was heartbroken. She could see the three capering over the ice and snow far, far away, having, oh such a good time, and the Bear seemed so friendly and polite she had lost all fear of him. Just then she heard a tinkling of bells and looked outside the window to see what caused it. There was a sledge drawn by some beautiful Eskimo dogs, moving along and going in the direction taken by the friends. She gave no thought to Santa Claus, or the Disconsolate Lover, or the Man with the Growly Voice, or even Billy, but rushed out of the door and leaped on the sledge which was slowly

moving away. "Hurry," she gasped, "hurry, or they'll get away."

To her joy she found the little Eskimo girl, Kokomo, was the only passenger, and Kan-kakee, her father, was driving the dogs. Kokomo turned and smiled at her, saying something that sounded very much like "muk-a-luk-a-chuk-a-grwokzbski." (That last word is a terrible thing, is n't it? It's very hard to spell, and I haven't an idea how it sounds;—it must be a very hard word, but Kokomo said it, so I have to put it in.)

Faster and faster they flew till they were going like the wind. Behind them were some more people, on sledges drawn by dogs, but Maida did n't care who they were or where they were going. All she thought of was finding the Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid. "Suppose," she moaned to Kokomo, "suppose he should get lost and should run down." "Blik-a-tik-a-zik-a-

rikow-bik ski," said Kokomo sadly. (Is n't it awful, the way those Eskimos talk? And I don't see how they ever learn to spell.)

It seemed an age to Maida, and it must have been several hours before she saw her two friends. They were standing in the midst of a field of ice, and poor Jack-in-the-Box hung limp and dejected on a block of ice, while the Candy Kid seemed to be trying to help him. She could see nothing of the Bear. "Stop, stop!" she called to Kankakee; but either he did not hear or he was in too great a hurry, for he only snapped his long dog whip and howled "Mush!" to the dogs. When an Eskimo says "Mush" to his dogs, he means what you mean when you say, "Get up!" to pony. Well, Maida could n't bear to see her friends left alone, so she rolled off the sledge into a soft snow-bank, and it didn't hurt her a bit. Then while she was picking herself up and dig-

ging the snow out of her eyes, all the sledges rushed by her without stopping. She ran quickly to the Candy Kid. "Oh, dear, dear," she sobbed, "what is the matter with him?" "He's run down," replied the Candy Kid. "Well, why don't you wind him up?" retorted Maida angrily, stamping her foot. "Can't do it," said the Candy Kid, "we've lost the key." Then overcome by his feelings the Candy Kid sat down and began to cry at the top of his voice. Which was perfectly natural. A huge white mound, which Maida had mistaken for a snow-bank, reared up beside the Candy Kid, and Maida stepped back in surprise. It was the Bear. Maida was very uneasy. He had n't eaten the Candy Kid. Well, perhaps he did n't care for sweets, and of course he could n't eat an overgrown alarm-clock like Jack-in-the-Box, but she had heard that bears like little girls as well

as little girls like chocolate creams, and she felt a strong desire to run. But the Bear did n't attack her. No indeed, he was n't that kind of a Bear. He laid his head on the shoulder of the Candy Kid and lifted up his voice and wept, which was very nice of him. Maida was so overcome by his grief she ran to him and wiped his eyes with her handkerchief. Then they all had a good cry together. At last the Bear put his arm about Maida (I call it his arm, though it was really his foreleg), and patted her on the shoulder. So she felt better, and stopped crying.

"By the way," said Maida to the Candy Kid, "I've never been properly introduced to the Bear. Do you mind making us acquainted?"

So the Candy Kid presented the Bear, who made a lovely bow,—really, for a Polar Bear who had never been in any sort of society, he was very, very polite.

And then Maida found the key. Was n't that lovely? Ah, I tell you, it didn't take her long to wind up Jack-in-the-Box, and how the four of them did laugh and cry and dance about, all through pure happiness.

"This habit of mine is very distressing," observed Jack-in-the-Box to Maida. "Did you ever start to talk or go somewhere and all of a sudden feel your mainspring give out and your wheels stop turning?"

"No, I never did," replied Maida, "but it must be—dreadful."

"And now, what are we going to do?" said the Candy Kid.

"I'm afraid I'll never find the Wishing Post," sighed Maida.

Then the Bear began to talk. If you think Eskimo talk is hard to understand, you should have heard the Bear. It sounded like the roaring of thunder and the rattle of

chains, but little by little they understood him, for he waved his paws, and pointed to the North, and wagged his head ; so finally they understood he would take them to the Wishing Post. Maida climbed on his back, which pleased him mightily. The other two followed them, and they set out again, the merriest little party you ever saw, on their way to the Top of the World.

Chapter IX

"Is N'T it ever going to be night?" inquired Maida fretfully, as they paused for a rest on top of a huge hill of snow.

"You forget," replied the Candy Kid, "that up here the days are six months long. Why, it's only half-past June." So they went on again.

"Oh, I'm so cold and tired," sighed Maida, rubbing her hands on the Bear's furry coat to warm them. Jack-in-the-Box looked at her in surprise. "Cold?" he asked curiously. "What is cold?" "Oh, *you* would n't know," replied Maida, and of course he would n't for he was only a clock-work man. But her answer did not seem to satisfy him, for he scratched his

head in a puzzled manner. "Tired, tired," he repeated, "the word sounds familiar, but what does it mean?" Maida sighed again; it was so difficult to make Jack understand. "Why it means," she explained, "you feel *so* weary; you can hardly lift your arms, and your legs ache, and you don't want to move." "Oh, I know now," interrupted Jack in great glee. "I often get that way. You're run down. Where's your key?—I'll wind you up." And she could hardly convince him that there was n't a key and that she did n't need winding up.

By and by they came to a log hut. Smoke was coming from the chimney, a bright light shone through the window, and a most delicious smell filled the air; so they decided to take a nice long rest. Jack-in-the-Box knocked at the door. It swung open and a huge Man with a Bushy Beard stepped across the threshold. He looked

like a very rough man and Maida felt a little afraid of him, but he paid no attention to her; he only stood stock still and stared at Jack-in-the-Box. Then he saw the Candy Kid and his eyes nearly popped out of his head. Maida saw he was afraid of Jack and the Candy Kid,—(for really they were unusual, you know, and enough to frighten a man, no matter how rough he was, and how bushy his beard)—so she decided to reassure him. “Fido,” she whispered,—(they all called the Bear “Fido” because he was so “cute”)—“Fido, you ask him to let us in.” So the Bear advanced bowing politely and in his own language spoke as nicely as he could. That is, he *started* to speak. For no sooner did the Man with the Bushy Beard see Fido than he jumped back into the hut. Still bowing politely Fido followed him.

Then for a little while there was a great

commotion in the hut. "Oh, they'll hurt Fido," screamed Maida in dismay, but before she could go to his aid, the door swung open again and the Man with the Bushy Beard popped out, followed by some more Men with Bushy Beards, and they all ran away as fast as they could.

"There must be something in there that frightened them," whispered Jack, cowering close to the Candy Kid. "I wonder what it could have been," was the Candy Kid's reply. But when they finally plucked up courage and stole into the hut, there was nothing at all inside to alarm anybody—and dear gentle Fido sat calmly beside the fire warming his feet. They looked all through the hut, in every nook and cranny, but whatever had frightened the Men with the Bushy Beards was gone.

After awhile the Bear curled up in a corner and went to sleep (and really for

such a nice Bear he snored dreadfully), while Maida began to explore the hut to see if she could find something for supper. Strange to say she felt a longing for a bowl of wheat and cream such as they always made her eat at home for breakfast. Her search was interrupted by the sound of loud and angry voices, and when she ran to the other end of the hut she was surprised to find the Candy Kid and Jack-in-the-Box having a most awful quarrel—and what was worse, it was a quarrel over some lady they both knew though she could n't tell who it was. Jack-in-the-Box was so angry all his machinery clicked and rattled, and all the sugar had been left out of the Candy Kid's temper, for it was anything but sweet.

"You overgrown alarm clock," he sneered at Jack, "I tell you she liked me best."

"Oh, run down, run down," snapped Jack angrily, "how could she prefer you? Why,

you're only a lump of glucose and some dye." And they went on at a terrible rate saying all sorts of horrid things to each other, but Maida could n't find out who they were quarrelling about, and it made her feel just a teenty, weenty bit jealous to find there was some one besides herself they liked, and liked well enough to quarrel over. Finally the Candy Kid appealed to Maida for aid.

"Where you come from," he asked, "when two people both like somebody else what are they?"

"Foolish," was Maida's prompt reply.

"No, no," persisted the Candy Kid, "what do you call them?"

Maida puzzled a moment and let her mind run over some of the romantic stories she had read. "I know," she said, "they are called rivals."

"Then I'm a rival," said the Candy Kid stoutly.



They laughed and laughed

"So am I," cried Jack. "Tell me—what do rivals do?"

Maida puzzled over this a moment. "Why, they take pistols or swords and fight a duel," she said presently.

"Good," replied the Candy Kid, "we'll fight a duel, although I have n't the faintest idea what a duel is, or how to fight it." Then turning to Jack-in-the-Box he added, "have you a sword in your pocket?"

"Oh, no," Jack answered quickly.

"Why are you so positive?" inquired the Candy Kid sulkily.

"Because," Jack retorted, "I don't know what a sword is, and I have n't any pocket."

"Pooh, that's no reason," complained the Candy Kid, and they were about to resume their quarrel when they were interrupted by Fido, who had been aroused by their noise and sat solemnly blinking his eyes. First he pointed to a picture on the wall. It was

a picture of two men fighting with long swords, and Fido pointed to the picture and then to them, and then took the poker from the hearth and showed them just how a duel with swords must be fought. And I may say here it's no use asking me how Fido knew all about duels—for I have n't the faintest idea—all I can say is, he was a *very clever Bear*. They clearly understood by this time what they must do. But alas, they had no swords. At last Jack had a happy thought. He dashed out the door and returned with two long pointed icicles, nearly as hard as steel, and gave one to the Candy Kid. Maida was very much frightened and wanted to stop them, but they paid no heed to her tears. The Bear planted her in a chair by the fire and shook his paw at her, so she felt afraid to move. The Bear stood between Jack and the Candy Kid and said, "ovowoogkgk."

(That's as near as I can come to spelling it as I have n't quite enough letters to make it sound just right), and just as soon as he said it Jack-in-the-Box stuck his icicle right through the Candy Kid's breast. Maida screamed with horror, but the Candy Kid



A Duel with Icicles

laughed and said, "you tickle." Then he ran his icicle into Jack's breast, and Jack ran down. It took all three of them five minutes to get him properly wound again. Once more the rivals faced each other and the Bear gave the signal. But they both

took bad aim, for instead of piercing each other, both of them stuck the Bear. That was the end of the duel. Fido was so vexed he broke both icicles. Then he took Jack and the Candy Kid over his knee and gave them a good spanking. After that it took them an hour to plug up the cavity in the Candy Kid's chest with sugar, and to get the rust out of Jack's cogs where the icicles had melted. And although poor Maida was very tired and sleepy she did n't feel like going to bed, but sat by the fire revolving a question in her mind.

"I wonder," she said to herself, "who it is they like enough to fight a duel over."

Chapter X

ON the edge of the Frozen Zone stands the City of Arcturia. You need n't look for it in your geography, you won't find it there; in fact, one of the men who wrote the "Geography" positively declared there is n't any such place. So it is n't on the map. But as Maida spent several days there she ought to know more about it than some old bookworm who stayed at home and scribbled while she was on her travels.

Did you ever go to bed at night when it was raining and raining and raining, then awaken in the morning to find the rain had frozen on the grass, and on the twigs—till all the trees looked as if they had been dipped in melted silver and then set out to

dry? Well, that's the way Arcturia looks. Without doubt it is one of the most wonderful and beautiful cities in the world—all ice—nothing but ice.

Maida rode on Fido's back across the snow desert with the Candy Kid on one side and Jack-in-the-Box on the other, for they were rivals you know and quarrelled dreadfully whenever they got near each other. As they drew near the city their eyes were dazzled by the brightness—even Fido blinked, but they pressed on till they came to a sort of wall which brought them to a halt. It was a most peculiar wall—it was so high the Bear could not see over it, even though he reared up on his hind legs, when he was very tall indeed. It ran East as far as they could see and just as far to the West, and it was hard and smooth, like polished iron. The four sat down in a row and stared first at each other and then at the wall.

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Maida, "and how are we going to get over it?"

Suddenly the Candy Kid remembered. "I know, I know," he laughed, "I remember now. I've heard Santa Claus talk about this. It's the Arctic Circle."

"That's right," chuckled Jack-in-the-Box, and the Bear nodded his head wisely.

"The Arctic Circle?" said Maida, "then we won't have a bit of trouble. We'll just go right on; for the Arctic Circle is only an imaginary line."

"Do you mean to tell me I don't see it?" asked Jack.

"You think you see it," Maida replied severely, "but if you just ignore it, why, it can't keep us back a minute."

"I'm going to find out," said the Candy Kid, and he walked deliberately into the wall and disappeared. The others quickly

followed him, and in a moment they found themselves on the other side, with the city before them, and the wall stretching out to the East and West, behind them.



The Walrus Mends the Street

The first thing they came upon was a Walrus, who was smoking a pipe and repairing a hole in the street. You've seen the men set in the granite blocks, or put down that black sticky stuff that is so nice to roller skate on when it is all flattened out and hardened? Well, the Walrus did n't

use blocks of stone or black sticky stuff on the street, he simply set in a nice fresh block of ice and packed some snow in the little cracks. The street was all ice blocks.

Somehow Maida didn't feel at all afraid of the Walrus. He looked very kind, so she timidly went to him and spoke. "Please, sir——" Then she shrank back a little, as the Walrus looked up in surprise. "I don't mean please, *sir*, for of course you're not a *sir*, you're only an *it*—but *please*—can you tell us where we can go to get something to eat?"

"On the corner of the next street," the Walrus replied, "you will find a street car which passes the hotel."

"But we have n't any carfare," said Maida, turning to the others, "have we?" And the others shook their heads dolefully.

"Oh, I'll lend you carfare," replied the Walrus, and he reached in his pocket, drew

out a large fish, and handed it to Maida. "Good-bye," he said, and began to work on another bad place in the road.

When they got to the corner they looked about for a street car, but there was n't one in sight. Just then a large sledge drawn by four reindeers dashed up. Somebody rang a bell. The sledge stopped, and a pretty Eskimo girl got off and pattered away.

"This must be the car," said Maida, and she was sure of it when she saw the driver was a huge Penguin, and the conductor was a Seal wearing a nice uniform. They climbed aboard, but the Seal would n't let Fido go in the sledge and sit down.

"Company rule," he said gruffly, "Polar Bears must be left on the platform," so Fido curled up on the back of the car. Maida handed the Seal Conductor the fish which

the Walrus had loaned her. "Four?" he asked, and Maida nodded; so he rang the bell four times, and gave her the change, which was half a dozen sardines.

Maida will never forget that street car ride, the first day in Arcturia. They passed through the market-place and saw ever so many seals trading their cast-off coats for sugar plums, and gobbling them up in a hurry as if they feared they would lose them.

They passed great high buildings, made out of blocks of ice, and saw little Eskimo boys selling newspapers printed on sheets of ice. Maida bought one, and after she had read it she ate it; and it was very good. At last they came to the hotel. They all got out and went in the office, and who do you think they found? Santa Claus and Billy and the Man with the Growly Voice. The big Eskimo, Kankakee, and his pretty

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daughter, Kokomo, while over in a corner stood the Disconsolate Lover staring out of the window as if he hoped to see the White Lady he was seeking.



Chapter XI

IT took them an hour to tell each other where they had been and what they did there, and where they were going and what they expected to do, and you may well believe Maida was glad to see all of them again. Especially Billy, for Billy was the very nicest boy. Maida was not very fond of the boys at home. They were always throwing snowballs, or fighting, or pulling the cat's tail, or tying tin cans to the poor dogs. Billy was n't a bit like that. The Man with the Growly Voice had been delayed because he did n't know the Arctic Circle was an imaginary line so he had to get a ladder and climb over it, but he had managed to preserve his can of climate

through all his travels and Maida was delighted to learn she would have his company the rest of the journey. As for Santa Claus, he was anxious to reclaim Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid, but they flatly refused to go home until they had finished the trip with Maida; so Santa decided to take Billy and go too, which was very nice of him.

"Do you know," said Jack-in-the-Box, as they all sat about the hotel office planning the journey, "there is something wrong with my knee."

"Rheumatism," said Maida wisely.

"Nonsense," replied Jack, "how can one have rheumatism in a ball-bearing? It's a hot box."

"What is a hot box?" inquired the Candy Kid, "I never had one." "Of course not," Jack answered, "if you had one you'd melt."

"I know what a hot box is," said Maida.

"I was on a train once and it stopped so we all got out to see what was the matter, and we found one of the axles had got dry and set fire to things, and it was smoking dreadfully."

"You'd better go to a doctor," said Billy solicitously.

"Doctor," snapped Jack, "what good could *he* do?" "You'd better send for a plumber," advised the Candy Kid.

"No, a plumber won't do," said Jack reflectively, "he would only say, 'I'll be around to-morrow with a piece of wire,' and then put in a bill for more than I'm worth. I am not sure when I'm to be repaired, whether I go to the jeweler, or the blacksmith."

Santa Claus put an end to the discussion, by thinking a new knee for Jack, and as soon as he thought it, why there it was and Jack was as spry as ever.

Maida wandered about the hotel marveling at the wonder and beauty of it. All the bell-boys were Albatrosses and they dusted the chairs with their wings, and carried satchels in their bills. The elevator boy was a dear little White Fox, and he invited Maida to take a ride with him. So she did, and got off at the thirty-ninth story.

"I would take you higher," barked the Fox, "but the sun is very hot to-day, and the fortieth-story has just melted."

So she stepped out of the elevator and walked about till she came to a lovely big room, with frost letters on the door, which read, "Ladies' Reception Room." It was the most gorgeous room she had ever seen. The pillars were made of solid green ice, the roof was all icicles and stalactites, and the walls were covered with lovely frost pictures, just the kind you see on the window on a cold day—and they

changed every now and then. While Maida was admiring the room she became aware that someone was standing at a window gazing out over the city, and looking closer she found it was the most beautiful lady she had ever seen. Her face and hands were snow white, her long robe was white and frosty. She wore a star on her forehead and her face was very sad. For some reason Maida felt very sorry for this lady, so she went to her and touched her on the arms. Did you ever put your hand on an awfully, *awfully* cold piece of ice on a winter's day? Remember how it was so cold it almost *burned*? Well, that's the way Maida felt when she touched the lady.

"My! but you're cold!" said Maida, "I think you've got a chill."

The lady smiled sadly, and looked at her, so Maida smiled back, but she kept at a little distance.

"Who are you?" asked Maida, "and why do you smile so sadly? And why are you so cold?"

"I am Stalacta, an ice maiden, one of the Vestals of the Queen Aurora Borealis." She sighed, and everything the lady said sounded exactly like the most beautiful poetry. "And with my companions I had sworn never to leave the Queen, but to serve her always. But one night I had a dream—ah, a most glorious vision. I seemed to float away on the bosom of a cloud, to a far land where all was light and warm and beautiful—and there I saw one whom I can never forget—nay, I would not forget him if I could. He was tall and straight and strong, his face was kind and his eyes were true; and as he looked at me my heart seemed to burst its icy bands, and I knew that I could never serve the Queen again, but could only be happy—with him. I

beckoned, he drew near. I held out my arms, and then—I awoke. Night after night I dream of him—night after night I see him holding out his arms; he is drawing nearer, always nearer, and I will never rest till he finds me.”

“Ah, ah, ah, come with me quick!” cried Maida. So she put on her mittens and took the Ice Lady by the hand, rushed her down the elevator, and hurried her across the hotel office to where the Disconsolate Lover was still standing, looking out the window.

“Here he is,” she cried to the Ice Lady; then to the Disconsolate Lover, “Here is your dream—the White Lady.”

The Disconsolate Lover turned, and he and the White Lady stared a moment at each other. Then *what* did *he* do, right before everybody in the hotel office, but take the White Lady in his arms. But not for long;

you see he did n't realize how awfully cold the White Lady was, while *she* did n't realize how very warm *he* was, being from the South. So if he had n't let her go—she'd have melted. And the two poor creatures who thought so much of each other were kept apart. The Disconsolate Lover could n't kiss the White Lady's hand.

"Oh, what shall we do?" sighed the White Lady. "I think so much of you—I *do* indeed; but you are fatal to me. If you come any nearer I'm sure I shall melt."

"You freeze me through and through," he answered; "but I don't care for that—for you really are the most beautiful lady in the world."

Then Maida had an inspiration, and she jumped up and down, clapping her hands with joy, for she had found a way to get them out of their troubles. "Come with

us to the Wishing Post," she cried, "and you can wish, each to be like the other."

Everybody clapped their hands at this, and said it was a fine idea, so the Disconsolate Lover and the White Lady agreed to go along with them.



Chapter XII

“Now who’s going to show us the way across the Forbidden Land to the City of Illusia where the North Pole is?” asked Maida.

“Fido, of course,” the Candy Kid and Jack-in-the-Box replied together; so the three hurried off to find Fido. They discovered him drinking pink lemonade through a straw, lazily keeping cool with a palm leaf fan, and quickly explained what they wanted him to do. Greatly to their regret, as well as to his own, Fido could be of no assistance, as he had never been any further North than Arcturia. He was willing to go along with them, but he could n’t lead the way. And although Maida and the

Candy Kid and Jack-in-the-Box, as well as Billy and Santa, and the Man with the Growly Voice, looked about everywhere, they could n't find anyone to guide them to the City of Illusia. So they put an advertisement in the evening paper and waited. Very soon the big Chief Kankakee followed by pretty little Kokomo and a number of Eskimos filed into the office of the hotel. The Eskimos all sat down in a circle while Kankakee stood in the centre and made a fine speech. As nearly as we (Maida and I) can remember, the speech ran something like this:

“I am Kankakee, chief of this tribe and a person of great dignity and importance. These, my vassals, will serve me to the death and go wheresoever I bid them. Have I not spoken truly, Oshkosh?” (Whereupon Oshkosh rose and made a low bow.)

"And of all the men in Arcturia I alone know the secret way across the Forbidden Land, and I alone can guide you to the City of Illusia. Answer, Keokuk, have I not said the truth?"

Keokuk rose. "You have indeed," he answered humbly.

"Now, seeing that I am a person of such importance, it is well that my service should receive a great reward. Therefore I will guide you across the Forbidden Land to the City of Illusia but you must pay the price I ask."

Then Po-Dunk and Cai-Ro and Chi-Ca-Go and all the other Eskimos solemnly nodded their heads and echoed "pay the price."

"What price do you ask?" inquired the Man with the Growly Voice.

"I ask neither candles nor spear-heads," replied Kankakee, "nor fish-hooks, nor blubber."

"I'm glad of that," said the Man with the Growly Voice, "for I'm all out of blubber, and my last spear-head is gone." All the same he felt very uneasy, for an Eskimo prizes spear-heads and fish-hooks very highly, and dearly loves blubber; while candles are just the same as lemon drops in Eskimo land. So he knew Kankakee meant to ask for something very, very precious.

"Well, I must go to the North Pole," he continued, "and if I can, I will pay your price, so name it."

Kankakee proudly tossed his head and went on with his speech.

"My daughter Kokomo is the child of a chief and it is fitting that she should know all things. She should be taught by a great wizard like you." (You see Kankakee thought the Man with the Growly Voice was a wizard because he had bottled up the Tropical Climate.) "Take my daughter,

therefore, into your tribe and teach her your magic, and I will guide you—refuse, and you will never find the way.”

Then Kalam-Azoo and Wis-Consin and Neva-Da all nodded their heads and repeated, “Never find the way.”

Well, of course, Maida was delighted, for she knew Kokomo liked her, and wanted her for a playmate; but the Man with the Growly Voice was dumbfounded, for he had never paid any attention to Kokomo or noticed her; in fact, he did not know she was Kankakee's daughter. So he turned to Kankakee and said, “How old is your daughter?”

“She has seen fourteen days, and fourteen nights,” replied Kankakee with dignity.

“Fourteen days and fourteen nights,” echoed the Man with the Growly Voice, in amazement. “My goodness—you don't want a teacher for her, you want a nurse.

I don't mind adopting a little girl or so, but I certainly object to search for the North Pole wheeling a baby in a perambulator."

Maida laughed and pushed Kokomo out from behind her father. "Here 's the baby," she laughed. "Don't you remember up here the days and nights are six months long?"

So Kankakee agreed to risk his life and guide them all across the Forbidden Land, while the Man with the Growly Voice agreed to teach Kokomo all his magic and to make friends with her. He searched through his pockets, found an apple, and gave it to her.

She examined it carefully. "How shall I wear it?" she inquired.

Maida laughed and explained—"It is n't to wear, it's to *eat*." So Kokomo took a bite and liked it. Then Kankakee took a bite and liked it, and the apple did n't last very long.

"I never saw anything like that before," observed Kokomo (meaning the apple). "How did it come to be?"

"It grew on a tree," said Maida.

"What's a tree?" asked Kokomo.

"Why a tree is—a—a tree——(Now do you know it *is* rather difficult to explain just what a tree is to a person who has never seen one?) "Why a tree is a great big post of wood that grows right out of the ground and there are leaves on it, and in the Summer apples hang from the branches."

Kokomo looked at Maida in a very disappointed way, then went to the Man with the Growly Voice. "Did you hear what that little maid told me?" she asked him and pointed to Maida.

"Oh, yes, and it's quite true," he replied, laughing.

Kokomo bowed humbly. "I am your

handmaid — you are my Lord,” she said. “If you say the story is true and these things are, then it is true, and they *are*—I will believe you, if you bid me—but why not confess the truth, that you *made* the apple.”

By this time all of the natives of Arc-turia who could crowd in the hotel office were gathered about listening with all their ears. The Man with the Growly Voice thought to dazzle them with stories of his own country.

“In my country,” he began, “there are so many trees we cannot count them. In the Summer they are all green. The grass is green too—it grows like a car-pet underfoot. Lovely clear rivers flow past the cities and when the weather is warm there is no ice and snow and the young men play and swim in the water, like the seals.” At this, a hoarse murmur

burst from the crowd—and an old medicine man pushed his way forward.

“You say your land is all green,” he shouted,—“all green.” Without waiting for a reply, he continued—turning to his comrades. “Oh, a horrible land. The green sun rises in the green East. The green seal peers through a green hole in the ice. Men and women, bears and birds, all green—oh, a horrible land”; and wildly shaking his head, he hobbled away. Another took his place and shook his finger wildly in his anger.

“It is not green in that land,” he shouted. “See this man is not green. But his tongue is crooked. He tells us of posts of wood that grow out of the ground. How can such things be? All men know that wood floats in from the sea, when the ice is gone, and that it comes in no other way. How then can it grow out of the ground? He

speaks of grass that grows like a carpet beneath the feet. How can this be? Is not the snow and ice too thick for anything to force its way through? *We* have never seen anything like that. There is nothing of that sort here, and everyone knows *this* is the finest and most wonderful country in the world. Then the horrible tale he tells about men who swim in the water like seals. We know that to be false. It is well known that when water covers a man, he dies. I am an old man but water has never touched my skin."

Then all the Eskimos began to talk at once—and—well, you never heard anything like it. Maida and the Man with the Growly Voice tried to explain, but the Eskimos simply could n't understand. Some took the strangers for evil magicians and the others thought they were telling whoppers. So the first thing they knew they were driven in disgrace from the city.

Chapter XIII

THE unexpected enmity of the natives of Arcturia was very distressing to Maida, while her little friend Kokomo was filled with fear at the prospect before her. She clung to the Man with the Growly Voice, and moaned: "When we go to your dreadful land where all is green, you will not let me turn green too,—will you? Nor will you let aught befall me. Ah, I know you will not. I fear me lest the awful grass pursue me as we stroll on the green rivers—I tremble much lest some savage trees catch and kill me."

"Have no fear, little snowbird," replied the Man with the Growly Voice cheerfully, in a most reassuring manner; "you will be

perfectly safe. All the grass is tame, and with the exercise of a little agility you can easily escape the attack of the most fero-



"How Do You Do?" in Eskimo

cious tree." Whereupon Kokomo was much comforted.

Maida felt so sorry for Kokomo that she ran over to her, flung her arms about

her neck, and kissed her. Now, of course, Maida meant well; she only wanted to make Kokomo happy; but it was the first kiss that had ever happened in Arc-turia. When the Eskimos wish to show great joy, and welcome or salute someone, they stand on the right foot, rub their nose with the left hand, and wiggle the left ear. So when Kankakee saw Maida kiss his daughter he gave a howl of anger, and in a moment there were half a dozen keen spears pointing at her bosom. And, of course, she screamed.

"She was trying to steal my daughter's breath," shouted Kankakee, as Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid tried to restrain him. "Tell me, oh, my daughter, are you hurt?"

Kokomo considered for a moment, thought it all over, decided that she was not hurt at all, and ended by going to Maida for another kiss.

"Oh, my father," she said, after she got it, "this magic of the white maiden is really very nice."

This aroused the curiosity of Kankakee, who called Oshkosh and awkwardly kissed him; but as Oshkosh was seventy years old, very ugly, and extremely wrinkled, the result of the experiment was far from pleasing; so Kankakee grunted his disapproval and arranged the line of march. There was quite a procession when the caravan was complete. First came twenty Eskimos on snowshoes. Then ten sledges drawn by dog teams (on one of which rode Kokomo and the Man with the Growly Voice). These were followed by Fido, still bearing Maida on his back, escorted by the faithful Jack and the Candy Kid. Santa Claus was close behind with his reindeer sleigh in which rode Billy, the White Lady, and the Disconso-

late Lover—while Kankakee came last, striding along behind to see that no one straggled. When they were all in line, ready to start, Kankakee warned them of the danger. “You are now in the Forbidden Land,” he said, “and it is unlawful for any mortal to cross it. Keep close together, and do not speak lest your voices betray you to one of the snow sprites, who serve the Queen Aurora Borealis. Burrow beneath the snow if danger threatens, and lie hidden till it has passed. The most deadly peril we will encounter is Jack Frost. He may not discover us—but if he should our fate is sealed. Mush !”

Maida began to feel a little uneasy. It was n't such a joke after all to find the Wishing Post.

She must have dozed a little, for suddenly she awoke with a start to find that everybody was standing still, looking at

a strange being who stood in their path. The Eskimos were cowering in a huddle and the dogs lay on their stomachs with their ears flattened on their heads, looking very much afraid. He who opposed their march was very beautiful—yet very terrible, and Maida was so fascinated she could look at nothing else. He was tall, oh, very tall, and rather thin. His face was lean and white, and his nose curved like the beak of an eagle. But his eyes, oh, those wonderful cruel eyes, they were light blue, and oh, so cold. When he looked at Maida she shivered. In his hand he carried a sword, not of steel, but made of something white that shone and glistened. His dress too, was all white and glittery, but rather thin, though he did n't seem to mind the cold at all. While Maida was staring at him one of the dogs leaped toward him. He did not move, or turn his

head, he merely let the end of the white sword fall till it touched the dog and the poor creature fell over on its back—all stiff and frozen.

Then Maida knew who it was. It could be no one but Jack Frost, King of the North Wind. Were you ever dreadfully frightened at a cow, or a big bug, or even a snake? Well, do you remember that sting-y, creepy feeling that went over the roots of your hair? Maida felt that every separate hair was standing out straight in a different direction.

"You are mortals," finally said Jack Frost, and the look on his face was anything but pretty. "You are mortals and you have dared to cross the Forbidden Land. What have you to say?"

No one had anything to say.

"You know the penalty," he continued. "No mortal has braved my wrath and



“When one is sailing a flying machine”



lived." All the Eskimos knelt before him and began to implore mercy, but he paid no attention to them.

"Now pay the price of your madness," he cried, and he waved the sword of white once about his head.

They heard a crack and a crash behind them, and turning about Maida saw a wide space of open water which prevented them from retracing their steps. They were afloat on a huge cake of ice. But she had no time to think about it, for she saw the white sword flash through the air again, and oh my, the cold was awful. Even poor old Fido shivered and grunted, and when a Polar Bear feels chilly you may know it is really wintry. A third time Jack Frost waved his white sword, then he laughed in a ghastly way, leaped up in the air, and disappeared in a shower of snow crystals. No sooner was he gone than the

wind rose and a terrible gale blew with great fury, urging the ice-cake along through the black water, just like an immense ship.

Now, of course you know there isn't much open water in the Arctic Circle, but the whole sea is frozen over and covered with an ice-floe which never melts. Well, the ice-cake they were on came to the end of the open water, tilted up, slid out on the ice-floe, then they began to fly along just as if they were in an ice-boat. The wind blew harder and harder, the cake slid faster and faster, racking and thumping and cracking and crashing, and it's no secret now—Maida wished she had never, never, never come, but that she was back in her own little pink and white bed at home.

Chapter XIV

It grew colder and colder. Maida cried out to the Man with the Growly Voice and begged him to use one of the little tablets of condensed climate. But he called back and told her the tablets were all gone—and that if he turned on the tropical climate from the can the ice-cake would all melt and they would sink to the bottom of the sea. So, of course, there was nothing to do but hang on and cuddle up to the Bear. Which she did.

At last they could see a long range of hills straight ahead, and they knew they were nearly across the frozen seas. At lightning speed their ice-boat dashed toward the cliffs and presently there was a great crashing and splintering of ice. The ice-

cake beat itself to pieces on the rocks and the whole party found themselves scrambling about on a most inhospitable shore. But they were all there, and all safe. The Candy Kid chortled with glee. If you don't know what chortle means get out your dictionary. It is n't an Eskimo word, though it sounds like one—but it means exactly what the Candy Kid did.

“Well, at any rate,” he said, “we’ve left old Jack Frost behind.”

A mocking laugh answered him, and there stood Jack Frost as fierce, as cold, as dangerous as ever. Fast as they had flown, he had travelled faster, and was waiting for them. So, of course, they were all in the depths of despair. Jack Frost blew a shrill blast on a silver whistle and in a moment they were surrounded by a legion of his Ice-Guards, so escape was out of the question.

Maida looked to the Man with the Growly Voice as if to beg him for protection. To her surprise he did not seem to be in the least afraid; he actually winked at her, as he unslung his can of climate and commenced to fiddle with the little keys and dials on it. And her heart leaped with joy, for she felt that in some way he would get them all out of the trouble.

Well, to begin with, they all came in for a good lecture. Jack Frost just gave it to Billy and Santa Claus for not staying at home where they belonged and making toys. Then he scolded the White Lady severely. It seemed that once upon a time he had asked her to leave the service of Aurora Borealis and come and be Queen of the North Wind, which she refused (and I don't blame her—do you?), so when he saw her with the Disconsolate Lover, he was very, very angry. After he got through

with those two he turned his attention to Kankakee and the Eskimos, lectured them for guiding strangers into the Forbidden Land, and to make it worse he lectured them in Eskimo talk, so I can't begin to tell you what he said—but it sounded dreadful—even the dogs howled mournfully.

Then it was Maida's turn; and as his eye lighted on her, she felt that shivery feeling in her hair dreadfully. When she was at home Maida had been scolded by mama and Aunt Mary, and once in a while by the cook when she ventured into the kitchen. At school she had been reprimanded once or twice by the Teacher—and the big Policeman on the corner—(his name was Murphy, and oh, how she wished he was by her side for he was n't afraid of anything)—well, Murphy had talked to her severely when she slipped across the street in front

of the trolley car instead of waiting for him to lead her over. But never, oh, never, had anybody given her such a scolding as she got from Jack Frost. I can't begin to tell you all he said, so I won't tell you any of it—but when he finished poor Maida was sure she was the most foolish and wicked little girl who ever tried to find the North Pole. And all the time the Man with the Growly Voice was tinkering with the Can of Climate and turning little handles and pressing little levers. Maida was on pins and needles, for something seemed to have gone wrong.

Her attention was attracted by four of the Ice-Guards, who dragged up a huge black box. Looking closer Maida saw it was a tank filled with water, while the front was made of glass, just like the aquarium where they keep the fish. Instinctively she clung to Fido, for she felt something was going to

happen—and it did. Two of the Ice-Guards seized her, and drew her to the side of the tank. Oh, it was just like a nightmare. It seemed that nobody could move, or speak, or do anything to help her—something dreadful was going on, and she couldn't cry and she couldn't call out. She was not left long in suspense. Jack Frost picked her up, just as you would pick up a kitten, held her over the tank, and dropped her in the water. Down, down, down she sank to the very bottom. She looked through the glass and saw all her friends outside, and she stretched out her arms to them for help. Then Jack Frost waved the white sword. All the water in the tank instantly froze, the sides of the tank fell away, and there she was—not drowned but frozen in a solid cake of ice. Oh, it was deathly cold, and she could n't move—and she could not get her breath. And then—ssssssshhhh, the



In the Cake of Ice



The Explorer Turns on the Tropical Climate

Man with the Growly Voice opened the can of climate. Well, you never saw anything like it. The Ice-Guards disappeared in a cloud of steam—the falling snow turned to rose leaves, then to a rain of lovely flowers. The ice and snow disappeared like magic, the ice block that imprisoned Maida simply vanished, and she found herself free. The air was full of Spring. Jack Frost gave a horrible yell and flew away. Fido clasped Maida in his paws and danced for joy. Everybody danced and sang, for palm trees and banana plants and lovely creepers and runners were growing all about—produced by the tropical climate. The Candy Kid smiled at Jack-in-the-Box.

“Spring has come,” he said.

Chapter XV

THE tropical climate did its work well. There was n't an iceberg left or a snowflake anywhere in sight. And when the Man with the Growly Voice took a nice swim in the warm water of the Polar Sea, the admiration and enthusiasm of the Eskimos was unbounded. They realized they had been told the truth about the Southland. Kokomo lost her fear of trees, helped Maida weave garlands of flowers, and found the grass nice to tumble about on. Everybody took off their heavy fur coats, with the exception of Fido; of course he could n't take *his* off—and really the heat did distress him terribly. Poor fellow, he wandered about from place to place, seeking a cool spot. Jack-in-the-

Box watched his restless movements curiously, then turned to the Candy Kid.

"Fido is a fine piece of handicraft," he said. "I've never seen him wound, yet I don't believe he ever runs down. Do you know, I think he's an eight-day bear."

They had a lovely supper of cocoanuts and breadfruit, with bananas and oranges for dessert; but when they prepared to resume their journey to Illusia they were confronted by a new difficulty,—Kankakee could no longer guide them. He knew the way across the Forbidden Land of course, after leaving Arcturia you go to the third iceberg, and turn to the left, then straight ahead, six hundred miles—so forth and so on. He knew all that, but all his landmarks had been swept away; he could not guide them through a tropical jungle. Then Maida had a brilliant idea. For such a little girl Maida was always thinking lots and lots

of clever things. She called Santa Claus who came over, took her on his knee, and chucked her under the chin.

"When you go about at Christmas time," she said, "how do you get up on the roofs?"

"My reindeers are marvels," chuckled Santa Claus. "They can run on the snow, in the water, or in the air."

"Splendid, splendid!" shouted Maida in great glee. "Now I'll tell you what to do. Take the Man with the Growly Voice in your sledge, and go back to where our flying machine fell. It's big enough to hold all of us, and we'll be in Illusia in no time."

"But my flying ship is broken," objected the Man with the Growly Voice. "The star-board wing is smashed, and there is a hole in the taffrail."

"I thought of that, too," Maida answered. "Santa Claus, you just imagine it's a great big toy and think it mended. Then it will

fly." Whereupon everybody shouted for joy. Santa Claus sat back laughing till he shook like a jelly.

"I can do better than that," he said. "I'll think it mended, then I'll think it here, and we won't have to go after it at all." So he did. He stood up and put his hands in front of his eyes, and *thought*, oh very, very hard indeed. Then presently he said smiling, "It's all right, it's mended." Then he thought and thought again (and let me tell you it takes a good hard think to make an airship fly seven hundred miles), and the first thing they knew the flying ship came sailing through the air and plumped down at their feet, just as good as ever. Of course everyone was delighted—that is, everyone except the Eskimos. *They* were frightened and climbed trees, crying out the airship was an evil spirit; and it was hard work to coax them down. But at last

everybody got aboard, and the reindeers were hitched behind because there wasn't room on the ship for them. And as everybody was tired and sleepy except Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid, who could n't tire, and who never slept, the two were appointed by the Man with the Growly Voice, who was captain, to stand the first watch. They were very proud to be entrusted with the care of the airship. They assumed a knowing air, and cheerily sang the chorus of "Sailing, Sailing!" But the Man with the Growly Voice stopped them (for while they were cunning, they were *not* good singers—neglecting to sing the same thing at the same time, and absolutely refusing to stay on the same key).

"Jack, you take the wheel," he said.

"Aye, aye, sir!" said Jack, touching his forelock. "Where'll I take it?" The Man with the Growly Voice showed him how to

guide the ship, and said: "Now steer N. W. by S. E."

"Oh no," said Jack, "let's steer C. O. D. by O. K.," and he twisted the wheel till the flying ship was waltzing in circles. It took some time to make him behave. Then the Candy Kid was given charge of the engine. "Be very careful not to desert your post"; he was cautioned, "don't go too high, for we might not get down again, and whatever you do, don't swallow any of the gas, it's fatal. Now I'm going below. You'll be relieved at eight bells." And the Man with the Growly Voice turned in. The Candy Kid meditated a moment, then said to Jack, "Now we can have our duel." "I don't see how," Jack answered. "You ninny," retorted the Candy Kid, "didn't you hear him say the gas was fatal?" "Fatal? Is it really?" inquired Jack. "Bring me a handful, I'll try it." Well, of course, the

Candy Kid was disgusted. Jack was so silly. "Do you think gas is like cheese?" he snapped. "I can't carry it around in my hands." "Oh, I see," observed Jack, "it's too heavy." "By the way," reflectively, "what is cheese?" "Cheese," said the Candy Kid, "is the mother of welsh rabbit, grandmother of indigestion—related to nightmare, on the father's side." "Very interesting," murmured Jack, "why can't we have a duel with cheese?" There was a silence for a moment. Jack had nothing more to say. The Candy Kid had lots, but he was too angry to say it. An idea struck Jack presently. "Kid," he called. "Kid." The Candy Kid angrily turned and listened. Jack went on. "We can't have a duel with gas, without a meter. I never saw a meter, but I'm told they're terrible things. You run the gas through, then you look at the meter, and drop dead." The Candy Kid

pointed to a rubber tube that hung from the bag overhead. "We'll eat the gas through this tube," he said. "I see," Jack replied, "and who wins the duel—the one who eats the most?" "Oh, no," said the Candy Kid, "the one wins who dies the quickest." So they left the flying machine to steer herself and run herself and swallowed all the gas they would hold. If Maida had n't happened to come up on deck no one would ever have known what became of them, and there's no telling what would have happened to the flying machine, for both Jack and the Candy Kid were turned into little balloons by the gas they had swallowed, and they bounced about on the deck, unable to get a foothold—until finally a little breeze swept them gently off, and the last Maida saw of them they were floating away to leeward holding each other's hand and singing, "Up in a balloon, boys, up in a balloon."

Chapter XVI

OF course Maida gave the alarm and the whole company came tumbling up the hatchway in a twinkling. The Disconsolate Lover manned the engine. The Man with the Growly Voice took the tiller and the airship started in pursuit of the lost chums. By this time the two realized their plight and were just as anxious to return as their friends were to have them back; but they could do absolutely nothing to help themselves. Aboard the airship they could hear the voice of poor Jack, off in the haze saying, "I shall run down, I know I shall, and then what will happen!"

"Run down," retorted the Candy Kid. "Why, you can't even *fall* down. We're up here to stay."

They tried to swim through the air, and waved their arms and kicked their legs, but couldn't advance an inch; they were at the mercy of the breeze. Every time the flying ship approached them, off they would float in another direction—just like—did you ever try to drive chickens out of a garden, and *just* when you thought you had them cornered, they somehow went between your legs, or over your head, or under your arm? Well, that's exactly the kind of time the people on the airship had with the two chums.

"Where do we belong anyway?" queried Jack as the two hung suspended over a huge volcano—"are we citizens of Alaska, or Arcturia, or Illusia?"

"I'm inclined to think," replied the Candy Kid, "that if we're included in the census it will be under the head of *floating* population."

No doubt they'd have been soaring about yet, but Maida thought of a splendid scheme. You will notice that whenever anything serious was the matter, Maida hit on the remedy. And in this case, it was very simple. Santa Claus and Billy just climbed on a reindeer each, and cantered off across the clouds, until they came to Jack and the Candy Kid. They picked them up and laid them across the necks of the reindeers and galloped back with them.

"Whatever made you do it?" tearfully asked Maida, after she had petted both of them.

"It was a duel," said the Candy Kid darkly, and that was all they could get out of him. But it made Maida feel very badly, for she realized the two were fighting duels again over the mysterious somebody who was the cause of their rivalry, and she wondered and wondered who it was.

Well, they pumped all the gas they could out of Jack and his chum, and tied flat-irons to their feet so that there was no danger of them floating away again, and the rest of the trip to Illusia was made without misfortune. Maida was asleep when they arrived at the City, and when she dressed and went on deck, she found the airship moored to a totem pole just outside the walls, and everybody gone. She searched the ship high and low, but there was no sign of her friends. She knew there was danger for a mortal in the City of Illusia. If she were found there she would be put to death; but she decided to take the chance, thinking she could escape detection in the crowds. So she slipped off and entered the huge gate. She was simply amazed at the beauty around her everywhere.

Huge palaces on every hand made of gold and silver covered with wonderful

pictures and arabesques. Pointed turrets that hung overhead roofed with polished copper. Tall towers of pearl and porcelain seemed to reach to the very skies. The streets were paved with marble, the fountains ran soda water, there were flowers everywhere, and no signs, "Keep off the grass" or "Private." But nobody was in sight. She strayed about through the deserted squares, and among the temples and shops, till finally she met a man hurrying as if he were late for supper. She stopped him. "Please, sir, are you an Illusion?" she asked.

"I am a citizen of Illusia," he answered, without stopping, "yes!"

Maida hurried along by his side. "Tell me sir," she inquired, "what makes Illusia so beautiful?"

The man smiled kindly. "Illusia is beautiful," he answered, "because it is built

of the rose-tinted dreams of young maidens and the brave hopes of youth. The dreams and the visions of the children are not wasted. They are brought here—they are used to build our palaces and temples. Time can never shatter them—they can never be destroyed.” And so he went his way. Although Maida did not understand exactly, she thought what he said was very pretty.

By and by she found out why the streets were deserted. She came to a great Plaza, and there was the whole population of the city packed in a dense crowd, evidently waiting for something to happen. She decided she would wait too, and she managed to make her way to the front of the crowd. No sooner had she found a nook somewhat sheltered, than a huge shaft of light, pure white and almost blinding, shot up from the palace which faced the Plaza. All the

people were delighted to see the white light and murmured with joy.

"What is it?" inquired Maida turning to the little girl next to her, "a searchlight?"

"Huh," replied the girl, "don't you know? That's the Queen, Aurora Borealis."

Maida realized she was in deadly danger, but it was too late to retreat, so she simply waited.

A herald came out on the steps of the palace and blew three blasts on a trumpet.

"Make way for Aurora Borealis, the Queen of Illusia, the most beautiful creature in the world," he cried. A long procession of young ladies, in white cling-y dresses came out of the palace, and every one was more beautiful than the one who preceded her.

"My goodness, they're pretty!" Maida said. "If the Queen is any prettier, she must be just grand."

All the trumpets played, the beautiful girls sang, the crowd hurrahed and bowed.

Then an ugly old woman waddled out of the palace door and waddled down the steps into the Plaza. She must have been eighty at least. She had a red face and pop eyes, her nose was like a banana, and three of her teeth were missing. My! but she was a fright.

"Who's that?" inquired Maida of her neighbor, "the cook?"

"The *cook!*" echoed the girl. "Why, that's the Queen, Aurora Borealis."

Sure enough, it was!

Chapter XVII

MAIDA stared in astonishment, but the ugly old woman was Queen Aurora Borealis beyond a doubt. On her head she wore a great golden crown, and as Maida stared at her the same blinding white light flashed from it straight up to the sky, and everybody was pleased because the Queen was pleased.

Aurora stopped and smiled. I wish I could describe that smile, but it would take three painters and a photographer to do it justice.

“Good-morning, my children!” she cried, “Who is the Queen of Beauty?” And altogether everybody said, “You are.”

Aurora smiled still more.

"Who is the Pride of Illusia?" she asked. Again a chorus arose, "You, divine Queen!"

"Yes, of *course!*" smirked Aurora; and then looking directly at Maida, she added, "a little louder over there."

The eyes of the multitude turned toward the stranger and Maida realized she must speak. "You, divine Queen!" she quavered.

"Don't be so piano in your praise," remarked Aurora, "a little enthusiasm goes a long way." Then turning to her subjects, she added: "Do you know my children, I envy you."

As if spoken by one man, a mighty "Why?" rose from the multitude.

"Why?" repeated Aurora astonished, "because you can gaze on *me*. You can feast your eyes on my lovely face." Then turning to Maida, she added fiercely,

"it *is* lovely—is n't it?" Maida managed to pipe out, "Oh, very!" but she felt guilty of telling an awful whopper.

"You can gladden your eyes with my sylph-like form," and again turning to Maida, continued, "If I'm not mistaken, it *is* sylph-like?"

"If you please," murmured Maida, "I don't know what a sylph is, I never saw one, but I am sure they couldn't look any worse."

Luckily for Maida, the Queen did not hear the last part of her speech. A minion approached Aurora, and distracted her attention by presenting her with a paper which bore a huge red seal.

"What's this?" she inquired petulantly, "did n't you hear me? I was talking about myself. Every time I get absorbed in an interesting topic you come along and spoil it. What's the matter?"

"Your noble Majesty," humbly replied the minion, "Santa Claus, the toy-maker, has deserted his post. We caught him here, together with two of his creatures."

Aurora frowned, then the entire assembly fell on their knees and hid their faces. From the golden crown a huge shaft of fierce red light shot up to the sky, turning the Plaza to crimson.

Then other minions brought on poor Santa Claus with his arms tied behind him, and Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid handcuffed together. Maida realized at once why her friends had all disappeared from the airship. No doubt they had all been captured—and she alone had been spared. She began to plan their escape. Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid were made to stand in a line with Santa Claus, and were so close to Maida she could have touched them. The trial was very short.

Santa Claus was banished. The Candy Kid was to be broken up and fed to the kiddies in Illusia, and the key of Jack-in-the-Box was to be thrown away, and he was never to be wound up again. Forgetting her danger, Maida had drawn closer and closer to the Candy Kid, so that when Aurora had sentenced him, the next thing she saw was a strange little girl who did not in the least look like one of the children of Illusia.

Maida thought her time had come, but a lucky accident saved her, as Aurora mistook her for some sort of a doll Santa Claus had made.

"Oh, here's another toy," she said, squinting at Maida, for she was very near-sighted. "I didn't notice this one at first. Ugly little thing, isn't it?"

Maida was about to protest, but a whisper from Santa Claus frightened her to silence.

"Still for your life!" he said. "If she learns you are a mortal, you will be put to death."

So Maida stood stock still, and never even winked an eye. A pretty little boy, Aurora's page, who carried her sceptre, stared at Maida critically. "I think it's rather pretty," he said.

"Pretty?" said Aurora, "pooh, pooh! Why, it's very badly made. The arms are much too long—the body is too slender," and she gave Maida a poke in the ribs which made the poor child gasp for breath. "The color is bad and the face is—waxy. I could do better work than that. I'll have them break it in pieces." Maida began to tremble. The little page, however, was persistent.

"If you're going to have it broken up," he said, "why not give it to me?"

"Certainly," said Aurora; and before

Maida realized what had happened, she was seized, folded double, packed away in a box, and was being carted off somewhere, not



Maida was Carted away in a Box

daring to cry out for fear they would discover she was a mortal, and put her to death.

Chapter XVIII

OF course Maida did n't know what happened in the Plaza after she was packed in the box, and carted away, but she was told about it afterward by Jack-in-the-Box. Business being disposed of, Aurora turned off the red light and the crowd rose with a sigh of relief.

"Now that we've settled and done with all this nonsense, let's talk of something really worth while," said Aurora. "Let's talk about *me*. Unbind those two rogues, and let them approach," and she pointed to Jack and the Candy Kid who were thereupon unbound and persuaded to draw near. Neither of them had paid particular attention to Aurora, so when she

stood in front of Jack and smirked at him, all his machinery began to rattle and creak and whirr like mad.

"Let me run down," he cried, "let me run down, I don't want to see any more."

As for the Candy Kid, he took one good look then covered his eyes with his hands. Luckily Aurora misunderstood their meaning. "My fatal beauty," she sighed. "The sun is too bright for our eyes. I must be like that to them. Such appreciation is a compliment. I pardon you both. Now tell me," as they started to bow themselves away, "Did you ever see anything just like me before?" "We never did," replied the two, and Aurora smirked. "For *your* sake," she said, "I will forgive the toy-maker. I had no idea he could make such clever marionettes. I'll have him make me a couple of hundred." Just at this moment there was a diversion. Fido came

galloping through the Plaza. Not being accustomed to Polar Bears, although they have a lovely Zoo, the Illusians scattered.

With his nose to the ground Fido was following the scent of his two chums and before anyone had a chance to prevent him



Fido Flew

he reared up and stood face to face with Aurora. She smiled on him. Did you ever see a fox terrier run after a cat? Then just when your heart was in your mouth the cat got tired of running, sat down, and stared in the dog's face. Do you remember

how the dog acted? Well, when the Bear came face to face with that awful smile he acted just like a very small pup who has chased a very large cat and discovered his mistake. Then he fled.

"Ah, if I could only see my own face," murmured Aurora.

"If you only *could*!" said Jack.

"Why don't you look in a mirror?" asked the Candy Kid.

"Mirror—what is that?" inquired Aurora.

"I never heard of such a thing. What is a mirror?"

"A mirror," said the Candy Kid, "is a device that always attracts the attention of the ladies. You can see your face in it."

"If I had one could I see *my* face?" asked Aurora eagerly. "You could," answered the Candy Kid.

"I want a mirror!" shouted Aurora. "I want a mirror. If I don't get a mirror, I'll

turn on the red light and I'll never turn it off. I'll chop off everybody's head if I don't get a mirror."

The Candy Kid leaned over and whispered in her ear. "Santa Claus always carries one in his coat pocket so he can see to rub the smut off his face when he climbs out of the chimneys."

Aurora dashed over to Santa Claus.

"Aren't you ashamed," she shouted. "Here I've been asking for a mirror and you wouldn't lend me yours. I've a notion to—there, never mind—let me have it. You don't need to see *your* face, you know, for you're ugly and old, while I—" and she snatched the mirror from him. "Now everybody stand back, please," she gurgled, "and give me room. I'm going to see my face for the first time."

The crowd watched with bated breath, while Jack and the Kid sniggered. Aurora

took the mirror proudly, held it up before her, and gazed into it.



The Queen Sees her Face

“There’s some mistake about this mirror,” she cried. “Some ugly old woman

has looked in it and her face has stuck in there. She won't get out." Then to her reflection in the mirror, she shouted, "Get out of there, you ugly thing—get out!"

But of course as long as she stared at the mirror her reflection stared back at her.

"Who do you suppose that is?" she asked the Candy Kid.

"Why, that's *you*," he replied.

"Do I look like that?" she screamed.

"Worse," answered Jack-in-the-Box, briefly. A flash of red light burst from the golden crown, and the crowd fled in terror. Then the light changed to blue, to green, and all the colors of the rainbow, every color trying to get out of the top of the crown at once. "Oh, see the pretty fireworks," said Jack-in-the-Box, pointing to the lights.

Finally, overcome by grief and rage,

Aurora swooned, and tumbled over on the marble paving.

“My goodness!” said the Candy Kid, “she’s going to melt.”

“Not a bit of it,” said Jack-in-the-Box, “she’s run down. There’s something wrong with her works.”

Chapter XIX

You can readily understand Maida was not at all comfortable in that box. It was very dark inside and very stuffy and hot. The box jolted and swayed till it nearly made her seasick; and to add to her woe she had n't the faintest idea what would become of her, for she knew that sooner or later they would discover she was a little girl and not a toy.

After what seemed ages and ages, though no doubt it was only an hour or so, the box ceased tipping and tilting, and came to a stop. Dimly through the wooden sides of her prison she heard voices, and realized she was the subject of a conversation. "What have you in the box?" said one voice. The most wonderful toy you ever

saw," was the reply, and she recognized the tones of her captor.

"Toy?—Huh!" sneered the first speaker. "What kind of a toy?"

"A marvellous doll," answered the other. Then there were shouts of laughter and derision, and it seemed that all the acquaintances and companions of the little Page were teasing him, calling him "Girl Baby," and asking him why he did n't wear dresses; in short, behaving just as boys would behave at home if they saw a schoolmate with a doll. But their mirth died away and the teasing ceased when the Page opened the box, threw the lid back—and pulled Maida to her feet.

My, how cramped and stiff she was! Both arms and legs were asleep, and she wavered, so she could hardly stand upright, which of course made her look more than ever like a marionette.

"*That* is n't a doll," finally said one of the boys.

"Oh yes," replied the Page, "it is a marionette made by the toy maker who lives across the Forbidden Land."

Maida forgot her danger in her embarrassment and snapped out, "I'm not."

"Why, she can speak," said the boy in great surprise.

"Oh yes," replied the Page, coolly, "and she can run too."

"I wish I had a chance," thought Maida, slyly peering about for a possible avenue of escape; but there was none, for all the boys were crowded about admiring her.

"Can she laugh?" asked one, and without waiting for an answer, he tickled Maida in the ribs. Well you know how it is yourself when somebody holds you with one hand so you can't get away, and points the forefinger of the other hand at you and it comes closer

and closer, till finally—why of course you just can't help laughing. At any rate, Maida could n't; serious as was her plight, she burst into a scream of laughter (for she was an awfully ticklish little girl), which filled all the boys with delight. The one who had tickled her was so elated with his success he tried a new trick.

"She can weep, too, mayhap," he said, and pinched her. Oh, a real hard pinch—right on the arm! There was no doubt about it, Maida could weep—and *did*.

"You cruel thing," she screamed, and burst into tears, at which the boys only laughed the more.

"She's not a toy, she's alive," said the cruel boy staring at her.

"Oh, no," said the Page, "if it were alive it would be put to death, for it's a stranger. It's a toy."

"What'll you take for it?" cried one—

and in a moment all the boys were chaffering with the Page, offering him their most precious possessions, and trying to bargain for Maida. But the Page refused to sell.

"I'm going to take it home," he said, "and take it to pieces. You see, when I saw the arms and legs off——" Maida could bear no more. She leaped out of the box, overturned two of the boys, pushed the Page aside, and was off, running like the wind. She did n't know where, she did n't care much, and she was out of sight around the corner before the Page and his friends picked themselves up and recovered from their astonishment. Then, of course, they followed her. How she ran! It seemed as though fright lent her speed. But the boys were all older and larger, so very soon she heard their footsteps close behind and realized they were gaining on her. She had reached another one of those large squares or parks, sur-

rounded with palaces, but she could see no way out of it except the way she had just come. In the middle of the park defended by a railing was a tall thin tower, or rather a huge mast, built of something that looked like mother-of-pearl all shiny and shimmery. It occurred to her that if she hid behind this her pursuers might pass her by, so she rushed toward it. Alas, there was no hope—the Page running faster than his friends was almost near enough to touch her. Tired and dizzy as she reached the great mast she stumbled and clutched it for support.

“I wish you boys would go away and let me alone,” she screamed.

Then a most marvelous thing happened. Instantly the Page and all his friends stopped, turned their backs, and walked away without a word. Maida was simply dumbfounded. What had saved her? She looked about, looked at the vacant square, looked behind

her at the palaces, looked at the mother of pearl mast which towered overhead. Then she knew. At last, at last she had found the Wishing Post, and her very first wish had been granted!



Chapter XX

WAS N'T it splendid! Her very first wish came true. Well, thank goodness, it would n't be long until she was a young lady—still there was no hurry. She was n't sure just what kind of a young lady she wanted to be. Besides she must make a list of things she meant to wish for, so as not to forget any of them. There was no safer place for her anywhere in Illusia, for if anybody tried to capture her, she need only put out her hand, touch the Wishing Post and wish them away. All her fear left her and she cuddled down in a heap and began writing her list with a stubby pencil on a little scrap of paper she found in her pocket. Suddenly her attention was attracted by

a pitiful sight at the other end of the square.

A young boy was leading a poor old man who hobbled painfully along, leaning on a cane. Both were dressed in rags and tatters, and the old man, whose beard and hair were white, wore a green bandage over his eyes which hid half his face, so Maida guessed he was blind. She felt very sorry, and watched them to see what they meant to do, but felt afraid to go to them, on account of the boy;—her last experience with boys had been so unpleasant. At some little distance the old man staggered and then sat down on a bench at the border of the roadway.

“Oh I am so tired, so tired,” he moaned. “Where are we, my lad?”

“I don't know,” she heard the boy answer, “this is the first time I was ever in Illusia.” And there was something about

the boy's voice that sounded very familiar to Maida. It reminded her of—*who did* it remind her of? The old man bent his head sadly. "If I only had my eyes," he said. The boy patted him on the shoulder and answered cheerfully — "Oh you'll have them soon, and then all will be well."

Maida tried to *remember* where she had heard his voice. Then a dreadful thing occurred. Two big Illusian policemen — and they are much bigger and fiercer than the kind we have down here—ran into the square, seized the boy, and despite his cries and entreaties dragged him away, leaving the poor old blind man helpless and alone. As soon as they were out of sight Maida ran to the old man who was calling out piteously, and soothed him.

"What can I do to help you?" she asked him.

"Nothing, nothing at all," he answered

sorrowfully. "You see I am blind, little girl, I am blind. Because my mirror showed the Queen Aurora how ugly she was, I was forced to look upon the purple light that shone from her golden crown. So now I cannot see. I shall never see again. And they have taken away my boy. I am all alone, all alone!"

"No, not alone," replied Maida, "I will guide you. It seems to me I have heard your voice, as well as your boy's. Lift the bandage and let me see your face."

The old man pushed back the bandage and you can imagine Maida's surprise when she saw it was Santa Claus! She threw her arms about him and told him who she was. You may just believe he was glad to find her.

"And now," she said joyously, "I've a great surprise for you. You shall have

your eyes back. No, don't ask me to tell you how, but you shall see again—and very soon." So she guided his faltering steps across the square to the Wishing Post. She touched it and wished Santa Claus to have his eyes again. Then she turned and asked him, "Can you see?"

"Not yet," he answered, so she tried it again. The second wish failed just as the first. Maida was dismayed.

"Something is the matter," she cried. "I've wished and wished but it does n't come true. What shall we do?"

Santa Claus tottered toward her. "Are n't you ashamed to play tricks on a poor old blind man—one who loved you so?" he asked. Of course that made poor Maida feel worse than ever.

"I was n't playing tricks," she sobbed, "indeed—indeed I was n't. But it does n't seem to work, though I tried my best.

Can't—can't you 'think' yourself a new pair of eyes?"

"I can only think toys," replied Santa Claus in a hopeless tone, turning away. He stumbled a wee bit and reached out his hand to save himself from falling. As he did so he touched the Wishing Post. "I wish they could n't arrest Billy," he said. Now, he did n't realize he was touching the Wishing Post, but, of course, the Post did n't know that, and it went to work to give him his wish. The gates of the prison flew open, there was a noise like breaking chains and rending bars, then Billy came out of the jail as if he were propelled by some invisible force. A half dozen policemen followed him, but every time they touched him they turned somersaults or flew up in the air and fell about, till finally they grew frightened, ran inside the jail, and locked the doors, leaving Billy standing staring about amazed.

But he soon saw Santa Claus and Maida and started over to them.

"Oh Billy—Billy boy," cried Maida, as he drew near, "come quick, quick." So



The Gates of the Prison Flew Open

Billy ran. Maida rattled on almost breathless, with mingled hope and fear—"I tried to wish his eyes back and I can't. *You* try." So Billy tried, and in a moment Santa Claus

had his eyes back and could see as well as ever. How he did hug Maida and then Billy, and what a happy trio they were.

"And now," said Maida, "that the Wishing Post is at work again, I'm going to be a young lady." So she made her wish. "Has it happened?" she inquired.

"No," said Billy.

"That's funny," she observed, "my first wish came true in a jiffy."

"Have you had one?" asked Billy. She told him "yes."

"Too bad," he replied, "you can't have another for a long time. The law is, only one within a year."

Chapter XXI

THINK of it, Maida could n't have another wish for a year! "Do you mean to say," she asked Billy, "that I will have to stay here in Illusia and be a little girl until next New Year's Day?"

"I'm afraid you will," replied Billy. And, of course, Maida was deeply disappointed. All her fears revived because she realized she no longer had a protector in the Wishing Post. There was nothing to save her from her enemies in case they attacked her.

"I don't think it's safe here," she said to Billy, "we have all lost our wishes, and the best thing we can do is to try to get back to the flying ship and have the Man

with the Growly Voice take us away." So they all started to make their way through the city of Illusia to the flying ship.

By this time the people had left the Plaza and were going home to dinner, or to supper, or to work, or wherever people go when a big crowd breaks up ; and the streets were full of them. The three were jostled and pushed, as people always are in a narrow street when it is crowded. And before she realized what had happened, Maida was separated from Santa Claus and Billy, and swept away in an eddy of the crowd.

She called and called, but no one answered. She was afraid to ask any of the Illusians where she was or how to get anywhere else because they would know she was a stranger ; then she would be captured and turned over to the Queen ; so she simply wandered about. But oh ! she was so tired, and so drowsy ; so when

she came to a pretty park where there were some nice long benches and the trees cast a deep shadow, she decided to take a nap. She stretched out on the bench and closed her eyes.

The first thing she knew she felt someone tapping her on the soles of the feet with a stick. Did you ever see a policeman wake up a tramp who had gone to sleep on a park bench when he should n't by rapping him on the soles of the feet with his club? Well, that's exactly what this Illusian policeman did to Maida.

"Come, little girl," said the policeman, "wake up!" Maida sat up drowsily, rubbing her eyes.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

The policeman grinned knowingly. "Now, you know very well," he replied, "that children in Illusia are not allowed to go to sleep till midnight."

Maida rubbed her eyes sleepily, and rose to her feet. She said to herself, "I used to complain at home when they made me go to bed at dark. Oh, dear! if I could *only* go to sleep." She ran after the policeman, who by this time was walking on, and said to him, "If you please, sir, how long is it till midnight?"

The policeman looked at her astonished. "You must be a very ignorant little girl," he said. "This is New Year's Eve, which comes on the Fourth of July here in Illusia, and it won't be midnight till half-past December." So he strolled away.

"Only July!" said Maida, "And I can't go to sleep till December!" She thought with regret of that little pink and white bed at home, of the soft mattress, the downy pillows, and the coverlet she used to pull up about her chin when she nestled down to rest. Well, there was no use thinking of

something she couldn't have, so she commenced to walk about again. Then she realized she was hungry, oh, *very* hungry! She passed a shop, over the door of which was a sign reading, "All kinds of fancy groceries." So she went in and asked the man if she could buy something to eat.

"Certainly," said the shop-keeper, bowing politely, "we have splendid charlotte russe."

"Oh, no, nothing sweet," said Maida. At this moment the shop-keeper's clerk approached her, saying:

"Won't you try a piece of this fine candy?"

"No, I don't want candy," answered Maida.

"Ah, I know," said the shopkeeper, smiling, "I know what you want. We have some delicious ice-cream, just in."

"No, no, no!" cried Maida, "I don't

want candy, charlotte russe, or ice-cream ; I want some bread and butter and oatmeal." But the shopkeeper and his clerk stared at each other dumbfounded. Maida looked first at one, then the other, and asked: "Haven't you anything good to eat here?"

The shopkeeper replied in astonishment: "Why, certainly, everything a child can desire—chocolates, and marshmallows, and gum-drops——"

Maida interrupted him—"And no fried chicken or corn bread?" she asked. The clerk replied: "Now what strange things are these? Certainly not!" So he and the shop-keeper walked away in high dudgeon, and she went out of the shop disappointed.

Who should she meet on the pavement but the Candy Kid and Jack-in-the-Box. They were as glad to find her as she was to meet them, and it took them all a long time to relate their experiences.

"Have you had a wish?" finally asked Maida.

"No," replied the Candy Kid, "what do we want a wish for?"

"Will you give me yours?" asked Maida.

"Of course," the Candy Kid answered, as he began to feel in his pockets to see if he could find a wish. "I must have had one," he said, "because they say everyone has one, but I seem to have lost it."

"Never mind," said Maida, "come with me"; and taking each of them by the hand, she ran, and ran, and ran till she came again to the Wishing Post. She stood by it, the Candy Kid with his left hand resting on the mother-of-pearl mast, and said to him, "Now quick, quick, wish that I am grown up." So the Candy Kid wished that Maida was grown up, and it happened. Just like *that!* Oh, it did n't take a second. Before the wish had been made she could walk

under the Candy Kid's outstretched arm, and now she was as tall as he was; but she didn't have a hangy, trailly gown, the kind that Aunt Mary used to wear; she still wore the same little dress, which only reached to her knees. "Oh, deah me!" she said, and my! how different her voice sounded. "What a shocking frock I have on!"

Jack-in-the-Box saw that she was disturbed. He said, "oh, never mind, never mind," and chucked her under the chin. She indignantly boxed his ears. "How dare you?" she said; "why, the *idea!*" Then she looked about in dismay.

"Deah me!" she said again, "how very imprudent! Here I have come all the way to the North Pole, and I've no chaperone."

There's no doubt about it, Maida was GROWN UP.

Chapter XXII

WELL, of course, her plight was rather an odd one. It did n't seem so out of the way for a little girl to be travelling about with all these strange creatures, but for a young lady, a grown-up young lady, to find herself at the North Pole in company with a couple of eccentric toys, without proper clothes, and with no chaperone—come to think of it this was rather a peculiar condition; so Maida walked away from her old friends, and sat down on the bench to think it over. Jack and the Candy Kid stared at each other in dismay. The change in Maida simply appalled them.

“Why she looks different, and acts different, and her voice is n't at all the same,”

said the Candy Kid. Jack-in-the-Box assented.

"Yes," he said, "there certainly is a great difference. I liked her lots better the way she was. This Wishing Post is certainly a very powerful piece of magic. I think I'll see what it can do for me," and he stretched out his hand. But the Candy Kid leaped forward and pushed him away. "Don't you touch it!" he said, "good gracious! just see what it did to Maida." So they sat down to think over what should be done.

Now Kankakee and his daughter Kokomo and the Man with the Growly Voice had left the flying ship early in the morning, and had been wandering all around the City; so just after the sad transformation of Maida from a dear little girl to a very pokey young lady they came wandering into the square. The Man with the Growly Voice was per-

fectly easy in his mind, but Kankakee was nervous and anxious. He was afraid that something might happen.

"I will take my daughter and go back to my people," he said ; and taking Kokomo by the hand he started to walk away with her. "But why," asked the Man with the Growly Voice, "why do you want to go away?"

"Because," answered Kankakee, "I fear that something may happen."

"Now, don't be afraid ; I will take care of you," said the Man with the Growly Voice. "I won't let these people hurt you. You know I'm a wizard. Just see what my climate did."

"Yes, of course," said Kankakee, "I had forgotten that you were a wizard. If danger threatens perhaps you will make the stars fall from the sky, or shake the earth, or dry up the sea."

"Why, of course I will," replied the Man with the Growly Voice, "a little thing like that would n't bother me."

So Kankakee took heart and decided to stay; and while the Man with the Growly Voice and Kokomo strolled about admiring the beauty of the palaces, he sat in Eskimo fashion, cross-legged on the ground, and crooned a Polar ditty.

Now the Queen Aurora, having discovered that if she had ever had any beauty, it was lost, happened to think of the Wishing Post. It had never occurred to her to wish before. Why should she? Queens have everything they want, so she had needed no wishes, but now she thought she would wish for her beauty to return; so she came by stealth to the Square, accompanied only by a page, to make her wish, for she did not want her people to know what she was doing.

The first person she met was Kankakee.

She gave him a scolding, but Kankakee paid no attention; he only laughed, and when Aurora threatened him, he only laughed the more.

"Why, you can't harm me, I am the friend of the great wizard," he said pompously. "He knows all things and makes slaves of certain devils. If any one harms me, this wizard will pull down the stars, dry up the sea, and shake the earth. He told me these things himself."

"Oh, he did, did he?" replied Aurora angrily. "Well, we will see about that. If I catch anybody fooling with my stars, or shaking my earth, or drying up my sea, I will have him arrested very quickly, I can promise you that. Where is this wizard friend of yours?"

Kankakee called the Man with the Growly Voice, who quickly came to him. Well, the Queen threatened them both with

all kinds of horrible things, but Kankakee felt perfectly easy in his mind.

"Protect me, my friend," he said, "pull down a star or two, just to show her what you can do; or shake the earth. You need n't shake it too much. He paused expectantly. "Well, go on; I am waiting," he said, "why don't you shake the earth?"

The Man with the Growly Voice was disgusted. "Kankakee," he said, "you talk too much." Then there was quite a scene. Aurora called some of her minions, who looked very threatening; Kankakee grew angry, because he had been deceived; so the Man with the Growly Voice felt very ill at ease. It happened that he was standing close to the Wishing Post.

"My goodness!" he said, "I wish I was out of this!" And *off* he flew into the air, out of sight, before any one could say "Jack Robinson"!

Chapter XXIII

MAIDA was grown up. There was no doubt about that. She could go anywhere she liked—she could do anything she chose—but it occurred to her there was n't any place she wanted to go—nor anything she cared to do. So she yawned.

Her sensations were most peculiar. She could recollect just how she felt when she was a little girl,—and she realized that she felt very different since the great change had taken place,—and to be perfectly frank, she was n't sure that she liked the new feeling. Of course, one always hates to admit one has been wrong or made a mistake. Still—when one is sure of it—why it's lots better to come out plump and

confess it at once. Try it yourself next time and see.

Well, it seemed to Maida as she sat there and tried to puzzle it out that there were two Maidas hidden away in her. One was the little girl she used to be, who always had such lots of fun and who enjoyed a good time. A little girl who liked everybody and whom everyone liked, but this little girl was hidden away down deep out of sight—bound some way so she could n't move. The other Maida was older and wiser, did n't care to have a good time—that is, the *old* kind of a good time—and was all stiff and starchy;—and really it's terrible to have to feel dignified, and to have to do things you don't care to do just because people expect them of you.

Of course she made a mistake in not wishing her dress to be grown up too. Still, she reflected, it would n't take long to

set *that* right when once she returned home. Home—that was the thing—*how* was she to get home?

She realized with great embarrassment—to the new Maida—that for a grown-up lady to sit about under the North Pole with a lot of strangers was a most improper proceeding. Did you ever have one of those dreams in which you found yourself out on the street in a nightie and a fur cap—or in a ballroom in a bathing-suit? And you could n't get away, and you could n't get clothes—my! it was just dreadful!—and you woke up blushing for shame?—That's *just* the way Maida felt.

She did n't know where the dressmakers lived, and she had no chaperone nor any place to go and shut herself in and say “not at home” if anyone called.

Finally she decided to write a letter home asking them to send for her—so she spoke

to a boy who chanced to be passing—one of the very boys, by the way, who had teased the Page to sell her.

It gave her a most unpleasant sensation to note that her voice sounded different,—oh, so different; and she also noticed that while she wanted to be kind and friendly her tone was haughty, and her attitude severe.

The old Maida, the little girl, would have smiled and asked “Say, boy, where’s the post-office?” Then the boy would have grinned, and stood first on one foot, then on the other, and mauled his cap about, blushing a bit—then he’d have told her.

That’s the way she wanted to speak. That’s what she meant to say. But *this* is what the boy heard: “Come here, boy! Is there a post-office in this outlandish place? If there is, I wish you’d tell me where to find it.”

And she *had* to say it that way; she could n't help herself.

"Decidedly," she said to herself (that is the little girl Maida said 'way down deep), "if I had met myself grown up when I was a child—I would never have wished to be *me*." This may seem very obscure, but if you puzzle it out you'll see it meant just what she thought.

But the boy—well, he was rather naughty. He simply made a face at her and ran away. Just then Santa Claus bustled up to her with Billy following him. Both had recovered their clothes and thrown away the old rags—so Billy looked just as nice and Santa Claus just as jolly and rubicund as ever.

"Well," chuckled the sprightly old fellow, "I see you've had your wish."

Maida wanted to be nice—but alas—the "little girl" was hidden down so deep she just *had* to step back and look at him

coldly, saying, "Excuse me, I have n't the pleasure of your acquaintance."

How Santa Claus did stare!

So Billy came up to her, his friendly face shining with joy. "Hello!" he said.

The child Maida was just aching to take his hand, and cling to him, but before it could happen another cold speech fell from her lips.

"If you wish to converse with me," she observed haughtily, "please have some one give you an introduction, for, of course, you understand no grown-up young lady can speak to a total stranger."

Think of it! To Billy, too! My goodness, but he was hurt!

"Don't you know Santa Claus, Maida?" asked the old fellow, greatly troubled.

She looked at him coldly. "Oh, I know," she said, "you're that amusing old myth I met when I was a little girl,

long ago." (And it did seem long ago.)

"A myth!" gasped Santa Claus. "Me? Don't you believe in *me*?"

"You must consider me very unsophisticated," answered Maida. (And the big word did n't bother her a bit now that she was a grown-up.) "You don't exist. You could n't exist. You're a figment of the imagination."

There—it was out! She did n't believe in Santa Claus! Yet there he stood before her. Clearly one had to lose much to be grown up.

Poor Billy made one more effort. "Why, you and I used to be such great friends," he said, smiling sadly at Maida.

She tossed her head. "That was long ago," she answered, "when I was a little girl. Only fancy, I used to like you very much then. So stupid of me, was n't it, for you're only an apprentice, and,

of course, you don't move in our set." How she hated herself, as she said that.

Kokomo approached her, saying something particularly nice in Eskimo, but Maida waved her aside. "I could n't be seen talking to a squaw—really you know," she sniffed; then as Kokomo stepped back staring at her in open-eyed astonishment, she added, "Horrid creatures Indians, are n't they? Such a bore——"

"Oh, little girl, hear me," said Santa Claus, gravely, and his voice sounded, oh so serious. "Through your lost years listen to Santa Claus, the children's friend. Was it for *this* you gave up your childhood?"

The little Maida was just dancing away down deep inside. "I don't know why," she answered, "but there's something in your voice that hurts me. You're making me cry." Sure enough, she was crying, and

every tear was washing away a grain of the grown-up Maida.

Then the little girl Maida triumphed and bubbled over. "Save me! Save me!" she screamed; "I don't want to be grown up. I can't have any fun and people don't like me. I'm afraid. Oh, somebody, please wish me a little girl."

It was many years before Maida was a grown-up lady again.

Chapter XXIV

It was Jack-in-the-Box who did it—her chum and playmate, Jack-in-the-Box, who had seen the wonderful change with great sorrow, and who first heard her cry for her childhood. With one bound he reached the Wishing Post, and presto !—she was a little girl again.

Oh, how good it seemed! She felt so much at home. Her clothes just suited her, she knew Santa Claus, she liked Billy, she loved her playmate, Kokomo—oh, she was so happy, so happy.

“It’s awful being grown up,” she sobbed, clinging to Billy. “I’ll want years and years to even get used to thinking about it.”

“You’ll have years and years,” replied

Santa Claus drily, and they all sat down to talk it over.

None of them saw the White Lady steal into the Square. None of them saw her approach the Wishing Post and make a wish. But she did. "I wish," she said softly—and a beautiful light shone from her eyes, "I wish to be as warm as he who sought me from the South." So, of course, she had her wish, and joined the others to tell them of her good fortune.

While they were discussing this, the Disconsolate Lover ran across the Square, and—well you can *never* guess the wish *he* made. "I wish," said he—"to be as cold and icy as she I came North to seek."

So when the White Lady saw him and took his hand she nearly froze to death—for they two had simply changed places. They were as badly off as ever, and not another wish to be had during the year.

So the White Lady sat and wept, and the Disconsolate Lover comforted her as well as he could—from a distance.

Now the Queen Aurora Borealis had been going about the Square in a fearfully bad temper, working the red light overtime and scolding her minions because the Man with the Growly Voice got away. But as she grew calmer she recollected her errand to the Wishing Post. She meant to wish for her beauty. Just as she drew near the Post, however, she saw Kankakee with his arm around little Kokomo, about to make a wish.

“I shall go back to my own people,” he said. “I wish”—but Aurora was too quick for him.

“I wish you not to have your wish,” she snapped. So, of course, he did n’t, and there he stood with poor little Kokomo, both of them looking very foolish.

"Thought you 'd get away, eh?" sneered Aurora. "Thought you 'd escape. Well, I'm not done with you yet, my gay and festive Eskimo Chief, and I will attend to *your* case after I have recovered my beauty, which I will now proceed to do. I wish—to have all my beauty back."

Then she smirked at the minions and said, "Has it happened?" The expression on their faces told her it had not, and a glance at the mirror which she still carried assured her of it.

"What's the matter with this thing?" she shouted angrily pointing at the *Wishing Post*.

"Only one wish during each year, your Majesty," timidly replied a minion, kneeling at her feet.

My goodness, *how* she raged!—and *how* the red light played! Suddenly her eye lit on Maida and a new idea came to her.

"That child is a witch!" she screamed. "She has stolen my beauty. If she does not return it, I'll have her condemned to the Icebergs for life." (That is just the same as prison for life down here.) "Give me back my angel face," she howled; "give me back my willowy form."

Maida shrank away in terror, and Kokomo approached the Queen to try and pacify her. But as soon as Aurora saw Kokomo (and Kokomo was really pretty you know) she screamed, "You've got some of my beauty, too! I'll have you fed to the Walrus 'à la Newburg.'"

At this dreadful threat Kokomo began to whimper while the minions started to laugh at her distress. The more she grieved the louder they laughed; and Aurora looked so funny and so odd, that despite their anxiety for Kokomo, and their fear about their own plight, all Maida's friends, and

Maida, too, began to laugh at the Queen.

Kokomo, meanwhile, grew very angry. "I wish you would all laugh and laugh and never stop," she said. Then they could n't stop laughing—any of them—because it was a wish. They just *laughed* and *laughed* and *laughed*.

"I'll have you *all* fed to the Walrus," threatened Aurora between her gasps for breath.

"I shall never see my home again," laughed Kankakee.

"I think she'll have us all killed," giggled Billy, while the White Lady tittered, "Good-bye forever," to the Disconsolate Lover.

No matter what they said or how they felt—whether angry or sorry or afraid—they just had to laugh.

Suddenly a great bell tolled on the top

of a tower nearby, and an old man appeared who shouted in a sing-song voice: "*It is now the New Year. Every one is entitled to one wish.*"

Maida started. The New Year! She could have one wish.

Everybody was rushing toward the Wishing Post, but she was nearest, and she reached it first.

"I wish everything was just as it used to be and I was at home," she cried.

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And she was!

Appendix

SOME exceedingly cynical and incredulous people have cast doubt on the truth of Maida's story. One of them actually said she slept and dreamed it all. The idea!

That very day the Man with the Growly Voice came to see Aunt Mary, and when Maida met him she asked him how he got back. He did n't just recollect for a moment, but when she reminded him, he remembered everything that happened while they were away together.

So *there* now!

Besides, Aunt Mary took Maida—not so long after that—to a great big house, like one of the Illusian palaces, where there were wonderful lights and a band which played

beautiful music; then a big picture rolled up and there was the Toy Shop, and Santa Claus, and Billy; yes, and Jack-in-the-Box and the Candy Kid, too—even the Bear—all of them.

So she knows it was all true. So do you.
Don't you?



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